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## MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN LEICESTER: INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL CLASS AND POLITICAL GENERATION

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**MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN  
LEICESTER**

**INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL CLASS  
AND  
POLITICAL GENERATION**

by

JAMES EDWARD HUNTING B.A. (Hons.)

for the

B. PHIL. HIGHER DEGREE (HISTORY)

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## ***ABSTRACT OF THESIS***

The core of this thesis is a study of the parliamentary electoral behaviour of a mid nineteenth century East Midlands town, namely Leicester.

Its format is a quantitative analysis based upon a large programme of nominal record linkage between the contemporary pollbooks and censuses, from which statistically reliable evidence was drawn and ultimately presented to argue the case of the existence and extent of social class and political generational influences upon electoral choice in Leicester during a specific period in time.

Naturally, such an analysis of voting behaviour would not have been feasible without a full knowledge of the contemporary local (and to some extent the national) political scene and of the socio-economic milieu in which it developed. The same is true when offering an interpretation of the analysis to the reader. Therefore a detailed account of Leicester's socio-economic and political life, both somewhat prior to and during the period focused upon, is presented in the two chapters which immediately precede the quantitative analysis.

As a piece of historical research it was also important to survey the field and present a review of those published works which have shed previous light regarding social class and political generational influences upon electoral behaviour. This has been covered in length following the introductory first chapter of the thesis. But there is an important point to be stressed regarding the content of this review. The social class dimension of voting behaviour has been especially associated with the mid twentieth century. Therefore it was considered appropriate to devote some attention both to this period and to the intervening decades which separate it from the period which my own research has focused upon: i.e., the main purpose for delving into mid nineteenth century social class influences was a quest for a precursor to a statistically proven (rather than an assumed) mid twentieth century phenomenon. Much the same reasoning lies behind the accompanying study of political generation which therefore follows a similar approach.



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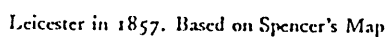
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Leicester in 1857. Based on Spencer's Map

## ***LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS***

Ch	Chapter
EHR	English Historical Review
GP	General Practitioner
HJ	Historical Journal
IOW	Isle of Wight
JBS	Journal of British Studies
JSS	Journal of the Statistical Society
LC	Leicester Chronicle
LJ	Leicester Journal
LM	Leicestershire Mercury
MP	Member of Parliament
P	Page
No	Number
RC	Roman Catholic
RC	Royle's Class
RV	Rateable Value
Vol	Volume

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Introduction to the Research – Thesis Content*

English electoral behaviour and especially the influence upon it of social class has been of increasing interest to me since early childhood. Even prior to my sixth birthday, when residing in a working-class district east of Leicester's Belgrave Road, I found myself amongst a group of older children under the tutelage of a local Labour party activist, Mrs Minnie Townsend, chanting a well-known ditty in support of 'Mr Donovan' and in derision of his opponent, 'Taylor'. The historical facts suggest that this event occurred during the general election campaign of February 1950 when the sitting local Labour M.P., T. N. Donovan, was seeking re-election and was being opposed by the Conservative, H. A. Taylor. It later became apparent to me that the Labour party consistently held sway in the poorer parts of the city whilst the Conservatives were supreme in the more prestigious districts, such as Stoneygate and Evington in the south-eastern part of the city, and into the county. Yet as my political awareness sharpened, I perceived the Labour partisanship of my home district to be seemingly accompanied by ignorance regarding political issues. It appeared that the locals' preference for Labour thus hinged not upon any rational choice between the contemporary policies of the two major political parties, but on a vague, established assumption that the Labour party was somehow the true representative of their interests: they were 'Labour' and that was the beginning and the end of it! However, as the local council election results demonstrated, a significant minority of the ward's electorate voted Conservative. But I did observe that within my immediate locality known Conservative supporters were usually owner-occupiers, not employed in unionised industries, and often retired small-business people. Arguably these comprised the socially superior minority of the local population.

Further observations were made after moving into a west Leicester area, in 1968, which comprised an inter-war housing estate, owned by a private trust, and a

postwar council estate. This district was thus more modern than my former, Victorian, Belgrave Road locality, but was socio-economically similar. Over the years since 1968 I have become aware of certain trends – one being the very marked reduction in the number of Labour election posters being displayed in front windows. Though especially a common sight along the trust-owned Halifax Drive during the general election campaigns of the 1970s this feature has since almost entirely vanished. Those who persist in the practice tend to be elderly. Concomitant with this trend has been a highly significant increase in the incidence of owner occupation, made possible by a decision of the trust to sell their properties both with vacant possession and to those sitting tenants willing to purchase, and by government legislation enabling council tenants to buy their homes. Yet no other change in the district is apparent. There have been no noticeable ethnic incursions nor any other social transformations. A possible implication is a concurrent local decline in support for the Labour party, but it would be hazardous to attempt to offer statistical evidence because the local ward has been subject to considerable boundary changes and property developments within other parts of it. However, taking the parliamentary constituency of West Leicester in its entirety, despite the undeniable support for Labour among the large Asian section of the electorate (who do, incidentally, display election posters), it has steadily shifted from being a safe, five-figure majority Labour seat to a highly marginal one during the past fifteen years. Perhaps this could be interpreted as a manifestation of generational change. The earlier decades saw the indigenous, working-class Leicester folk living in relatively cheap rented accommodation, voting Labour and advertising the fact. These have progressively given way to succeeding generations who, though occupying a broadly similar position within the socio-economic spectrum, prefer owner occupation and are relatively less committed to any political party. Rather they may act as discerning individuals in their electoral preferences: i.e. they choose the party deemed best for them as individuals rather than as a close-knit community or class. But the change may not be purely to the disadvantage of Labour: the by-election at Mid-Staffordshire early in 1990, which witnessed an enormous defection of traditional

Conservative support to Labour, may well be symptomatic of a loosening of party ties. Whilst it is true that by-election 'shocks' have characterised the political scene since Orpington in 1962, massive swings of opinion have, until more recently, tended to benefit the smaller parties of the centre.

The content of the two previous paragraphs is, admittedly, largely impressionistic and not based on the quantitative techniques that typify the analyses presented in this thesis, which focus upon a period of which I can have had no personal experience. The purpose of its inclusion is to serve as an introduction – to indicate that my overall perception of social class and political generational influences on electoral behaviour has not entirely developed from the conclusions of modern historical writers, political scientists and 'experts' within the mass-media, but that personal observations over many years have made a contribution.

A strong argument justifying the study of history is that it helps to explain the more recent past, the present and, possibly, to predict the pathway of future developments. It thus seemed appropriate that while reading the Open University course, D301, 'Historical Sources and the Social Scientist', as an undergraduate in 1983 that I should choose to focus the project component of the course on historical psephology. I examined the influences of social class and political generation on the parliamentary election of 1852 using a statistical approach based on the Leicester borough electorate. The outcome of that analysis suggested that the Leicester electorate of the mid nineteenth century provided fertile ground for an in-depth study and the research presented in the following chapters illustrates my attempt to produce such an in-depth study. However, I must stress that despite this tenuous link with a previous study all data and conclusions presented in this thesis are entirely anew.

Chapter Two comprises a survey of those published works on English electoral behaviour which have produced revelations on social class and age factors in accounting for who voted for whom. The social class dimension occupies the major

part of the chapter and this reflects the fact that this aspect of electoral behaviour has been the focus of considerable attention on the part of psephologists and social historians. One characteristic of this section of Chapter Two is that much of it dwells upon periods later in time to the period upon which my own analyses are specifically based, but that was fully realised at the time of its compilation. As a whole social class influences are discussed in terms of research carried out on three broad periods of time: the mid twentieth century, the period of the later Victorian/early twentieth century, and the mid nineteenth century. The reason for their ordering in this way can be explained. The mid twentieth century period is well nigh universally recognized as being an era when social class was the dominant determinant in electoral choice. Therefore, it seemed apt to focus on this period first: i.e. it was thought wise to initially establish, rather than to assume, the social class factor of the mid twentieth century before attempting to claim antecedents a century earlier. But the phenomenon becomes controversial when attempting to discover when, how and why it came to be so dominant. Thus the appropriate next step was to survey the findings of researchers on the late nineteenth/early twentieth century period. Here the pattern is less clear-cut: some perceiving social class to be a significant factor, others seeing religious affiliation as the major determinant. Finally it was imperative to survey the field contemporaneous with my own research – the mid nineteenth century, in which the consensus of opinion rejects the existence of a pattern of social class-based voting along the lines featuring a century later and, arguably, during much of the intervening period. But the concept of social class is in itself a thorny topic and therefore some space has been given in Chapter Two to the issues confronting its study. The survey on influences of political generation, which forms the later section of the chapter has been presented in a similar format to that on social class: i.e. beginning with the findings of the mid twentieth century.

Any valid interpretations of analyses of electoral behaviour must necessarily be rooted in the events and developments of the political scene during the period under study. Few would disagree too that a mid nineteenth century electoral analysis must

be set in its local context, although contemporary developments at national level should by no means be overlooked. Therefore two chapters have been compiled with this end in view. Though not mutually exclusive the scrutiny of the political scene has been set in a two-chapter structure partly to avoid an undue, lengthy, single chapter, and partly to ease reading and comprehension of the wealth of information presented.

The second of these two chapters (Chapter Four) gives an account of the local political developments at parliamentary constituency level. I felt this necessarily entailed giving some attention to events during the decade and a half prior to the first (1847) of the five elections analysed in subsequent chapters chiefly because 1832 was an important landmark in the historical development of parliamentary politics. But considerable attention has been given to the 1847–61 period, where I have sought to enable the reader to gain a powerful insight into what seems to have been an ebullient period in Leicester's parliamentary political history. To this end I have made much use of important primary sources – the three contemporary local newspapers. These provided invaluable information to buttress the account of the local historical developments, much of which had been gleaned from the pages of 'Victoria Histories'. References to published works are also made at appropriate points in the text.

Chapter Three concentrates on three aspects of the mid nineteenth century Leicester scene: local government, industry and working-class politics. The first focuses on the rise to ascendancy of the, largely nonconformist, Liberals in the key positions of local political power: the new town council provided under the terms of the Whig government Act of 1835, the Poor Law board of guardians, and the parish vestries. The second looks especially into the mixed fortunes of Leicester's contemporary staple industry – the hosiery trade – with its implications for the electoral process. The final section is given to an outline of specifically working-class developments within the borough: the early moves in the field of unionisation and the rise to



prominence of Chartism during the later 1830s and 1840s. But though much of the content of Chapter Three concentrates on the period preceding the first of the series of analysed elections (1847) this was primarily an outcome of the developments within Leicester's political scene at the time and owes little to the selection of source material. It is not simply an effect of the switch in source material from A. T. Patterson's 'Radical Leicester' (which terminates at 1850) to the local press (1847 – 61). As indicated at the close of Chapter Three there seems to have been a definite shift of the main theatre of political activity, during the late 1840s, from the local authority level to the parliamentary sphere of Leicester's political life. During the 1830s and 1840s the local Liberals were endeavouring to secure control of the key positions in the borough's authority structure. This having been largely achieved by the late 1840s the emphasis was from that time on centred more on the issues of franchise reform and disestablishment, which lay beyond the scope of local government. Thus the parliamentary representative sphere then became the major theatre for the conflicts which are detailed in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five comprises two main sections. The first focuses upon the scheme of analysis used in the research. A discussion is presented on the uses of pollbooks in attempting to gain insight into the electoral patterns of the mid nineteenth century, indicating their advantages and shortcomings, both generally and within the specific confines of the facts I was attempting to elucidate. In turn attention is given to other numerical sources necessary for an analysis of the kind presented in this thesis: i.e. the electoral registers and the census enumerators' books. The second section of Chapter Five is a presentation of the analyses conducted on the above source material. It will be apparent to the reader that the whole system is based on the extensive use of quantitative techniques, and that considerable use has been made of the correlation coefficient. Thus the analytical approach is scientific and is intended to avoid the strong element of impressionism which, the historical social scientists claim, characterises so much social history. But in addition this section of Chapter Five does feature some discussion on the findings of the quantitative

analyses as they emerge and prepares the ground for a further, thoroughgoing investigation into the outcome of the research in Chapter Six.

The concluding chapter of the thesis (Chapter Six) pulls together the threads of the research. But despite an appropriately strong emphasis on the influences of social class and political generation on the voting pattern of mid nineteenth century Leicester the chapter also includes an investigation into the contemporaneous influence of religion in order to achieve a measure of balance.

Overall the quantitative aspect of the research is not all-encompassing. Although a considerable wealth of data was gathered the information drawn from it and presented in Chapter Five is, and had to be, selective. No electronic aids beyond the pocket calculator were employed in the computations. The original data could thus be subject to considerable further investigation should the occasion arise.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ***Review of Published Works on English Electoral Behaviour Since 1832: Possible Influences of Social Class and Political Generation***

In their research on English electoral behaviour during 1963 D. Butler and D. Stokes found that about 88% of their questionnaire respondents gave evidence of seeing politics as the representation of class interests: and, in agreement with pioneering post-war studies by other political scientists, they drew the conclusion that party allegiance (Labour/Conservative) followed social class lines more strongly in Britain than elsewhere in the English-speaking world, where social data are available<sup>1</sup>. However, the dictum of Peter Pulzer<sup>2</sup>: that 'class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail': may overstate the case. Indeed, David Feldman has pointed out that describing British electoral sociology as formed by class alignments appears a very partial description and he stresses that the Labour successes of 1945 and 1966 necessitated the party making inroads among the middle classes. Thus the Labour successes depended on the disruption of class alignments, at least in part. Moreover working-class support for the Conservative party must be acknowledged: even as late as the 1930s about one third of the working-class electorate voted Conservative<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless this is not to deny the consensus of opinion which recognizes the salience of class in the mid twentieth century electoral scene. But the consensus exists alongside a widely held view that electoral cleavage along social class lines had not always delineated party support in British political life. However, the question as to when and how the transformation took place has, according to K. D. Wald, become the foremost issue in research on British political development<sup>4</sup>.

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1. Butler and Stokes, pp67-94.  
4. Wald, p202.

2. Pulzer, p102.

3. Feldman, pp312-324.

The 'traditional' school of thought, promoted by such as G. M Trevelyan, claimed the effects of the First World War engendered a sharp discontinuity between the pre-war and post-war bases of electoral cleavage, concomitant with the rise of the Labour party to the fore of British politics in the 1922 general election. They believed that the decreasing salience of the religious controversy, which had structured the Victorian alignment, brought a loosening of traditional party links within the electorate, whilst extension of the franchise in 1918 produced a large number of voters, uninterested in sectarian politics and highly susceptible to a Labour party which emphasized working-class interests. In response the Conservative party became increasingly the agent of middle-class interests. This realignment synchronized the party system with the social structure and thereby heralded a new system which essentially represented social class conflict<sup>5</sup>.

This 'traditional' interpretation presupposed the salience of an electoral cleavage along religious lines before 1918 – a feature that had long been widely recognized. In particular there was a considerable affinity between the adherents of the Established Church and the Conservative party (as epitomized in Macaulay's famous gibe that the state Church was 'the Tory party at prayer'), just as there was a concomitant affinity between old dissent and the Liberal party. The role of religion in this case was, at least to some extent, that of the 'interest group' phenomenon: i.e. as a party becomes the traditional champion of a particular denomination the connection between the two tends to strengthen by the development of shared values. Indeed throughout the century preceding 1918 there was a constant theme of Conservative opposition to Whig/Liberal efforts to remove nonconformist disabilities: the Whig initiative to repeal the Test and Corporations Act in 1828, Lord Melbourne's legalisation of non-Anglican marriage rites in the 1830s, the constant Whig/Liberal opposition to Church rates, the Liberals' success in opening the universities to

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5. *Ibid*, pp202–219.

dissenters, Liberal sympathy towards nonconformist attacks on the Established Church, education and entertainment, Liberal support for Welsh disestablishment in 1895, Liberal opposition to the 1902 Education Act – which seemingly favoured Anglican influence in the schools, Liberal support for temperance and opposition to the pro-church House of Lords. On the Conservative's side there was the Anglican lobby in the style of the 'Primrose League', and support was given to the drink trade against Liberal temperance influence<sup>6</sup>.

But the religious cleavage was not entirely a church/chapel conflict. Roman Catholics, though in terms of education, drink and sabbatarian outlooks, were more akin to Conservatism, a strong and probably decisive countercurrent wrought by the Irish issue (especially after the first home rule controversy in 1886) cemented, albeit precariously, a R.C./Liberal alliance. In this case the phenomenon of religion as a 'belief system', i.e. the Catholic emphasis on individual sin and personal salvation, which in consequence discouraged attempts to solve social problems through collective action, was overborne by the Irish ethnicity influence of the majority of Roman Catholics residing in England, Thus Irish Catholics voted as Irishmen first and as Catholics second. However, in terms of overall electoral behaviour, since R.C.s were not enfranchised in proportion to their numbers a not uncommon outcome was an increase in support for the Conservatives due to an anti Irish/Catholic backlash among protestant voters. P. F. Clarke observed this pattern in his research on Oldham and on Lancashire in general wherein the Irish resided in large numbers<sup>7</sup>.

In contrast to the 'traditionalists' the 'revisionists', like P. F. Clarke, Henry Pelling, and N. Blewitt et al, leaning towards a greater reliance on quantitative evidence and critical of the 'impressionistic' conclusions previously drawn, disagreed on the nature and timing of the realignment. Rather they perceived the transformation of the

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6. *Ibid*, pp55–66.

7. *Clarke*, pp46–47.

cleavage to have predated World War One—decisive even as early as 1885 when the bulk of enfranchised workers were grouped under the Liberal banner. They claimed the cleavage shift from religion to class was a separate process from the Labour/Liberal displacement, which occurred through a combination of mistakes and bad luck on the part of the Liberals<sup>8</sup>.

'Revisionist' views are thus more akin to the general class interpretation – that the process of social differentiation by parties began after 1832. The Conservatives represented land, the traditional source of influence in British government, against the ambitions of the emerging industrial capitalists, whose claims were championed by the Whigs and their successors, the Liberals. (However, this is undoubtedly a much over-simplified generalisation, for it overlooks the fact that the Whigs too were major landowners whilst Peel had considerable sympathy with the industrial interest). But this cleavage overlapped city/country and church/dissent divisions, therefore class was only one element in the formation of party alignments. Subsequent extensions to the franchise in 1867 and 1884 led to the consolidation of land and capital in the Conservative party, and the emergence of the Liberals as champions of the working-class. Although J. S. Mill professed to see this happening in the 1830s, most accounts tie the clarification of class alignments to Gladstone's increasing radicalism over the Irish issue: i.e. the Irish Land Acts inspired fears concerning the will of the Liberals to resist further attacks on property. Consequently the Whiggish Liberals joined the Conservatives; the defection of Joseph Chamberlain being an exception to the rule. The remainder of the Liberal party, shorn of its middle-class base, became more identified with working-class interests from 1886 onwards: eg. the 'Newcastle Programme' of 1892 and the Liberal inheritance taxes of 1892–5. The defeats of 1895 and 1900 were ascribed to working-class Imperialism and Liberal reluctance to go far enough to meet working-class grievances. Between 1906 and 1914 the

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8. *Wald, pp203–205.*

Liberals laid the groundwork for the modern welfare state, extended the recognition of trade-union rights, and promoted land taxes in their 1909 budget. These moves were accompanied by the intellectual approach of 'New Liberalism' by authors such as J. A. Hobson and disseminated through the 'Manchester Guardian', thereby indicating that the party was well equipped as a progressive force in British politics before 1914<sup>9</sup>.

Actually, perceiving the political scene in terms of class during the period of the Third Reform Act (1884–1918) was not lost on its contemporaries. Sir William Harcourt claimed in 1894 that the innovation of household suffrage had brought about a rapidly expanding horizontal division of the parties, whilst Gladstone observed, during the 1886 home rule crisis, that the masses had aligned with the Liberals against the 'classes' and their Conservative spokesmen. Also Conservative opponents of Disraeli's 'Tory democracy' perceived the development of universal manhood suffrage as a threat to their very survival as a major political force. In fact belief was widespread that a solid majority of the enfranchised working-class supported the Liberals or their Labour allies: an impression which was confirmed by the Liberal preponderance in industrial and urban parliamentary constituencies. Friedrich Engels agreed that the English working-class had, since its enfranchisement, become the 'tail of the great Liberal party'. Even the 'traditionalist' Trevelyan gave further currency to the assumption that the pre-war working-class had been solidly attached to the Liberal party when he contended, in 1922, that the World War had brought about a wholesale transfer of the working-class vote from Liberal to Labour. In 1895 the American scholar, E. Porrit, called attention to the increasing significance of social stratification in British politics, with the English middle-class rapidly becoming Conservative. Local observers drew similar conclusions: eg.. the Wolverhampton Liberals saw the west constituency becoming an extension of 'villadom', whilst their

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9. *Ibid*, pp27–32.

most reliable electoral support was located in the industrial districts of the southern and eastern parliamentary divisions. In Brighton the 'radical working-man' was the acknowledged backbone of 1894 Liberalism, who rejected even Conservative working-men candidates, thereby underscoring the association between the working-class voter and Liberal partisanship<sup>10</sup>. Peter Pulzer claimed that the positive correlation between declining social status and increase in support for the party of the left had been particularly marked since the Second Reform Act of 1867<sup>11</sup>.

Regarding systematic analysis, Henry Pelling presented data for constituencies in the London area using published census data on the number of female domestic servants per 100 households in three categories of constituencies: those predominantly middle-class, those mixed and those predominantly working-class. He found that the Conservative vote increased steadily with increase in servants in all eight general elections between 1885 and 1910. Pelling concluded that class counted more than any other factor in London and thought that the class/party relationship probably held throughout the country.

Paul Thompson attempted to estimate the actual working-class and middle-class share of the London electorate, relying on a census of street blocks conducted by the school board visitors in 1889 and published in Charles Booth's survey. Apportioning each block to its appropriate parliamentary constituency, Thompson estimated the working-class and middle-class electorates by taking fractions of the respective class populations in the electoral districts. The constituencies were then collapsed into five groups ranging from 75% middle-class to 52.5% middle-class (1885 – 1910). In all general elections the Liberal vote declined with the increased concentration of middle-class electors.

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10. *Ibid*, pp20–24.

11. *Pulzer*, p102.



James Cornford hypothesized that the adoption of single-member constituencies in 1885, which concentrated the voters into socially homogeneous electoral districts, facilitated the development of an electoral cleavage along class lines. He then studied the relationship between capita assessed valuation (a means of constituency wealth) and the Conservative share of the vote in 1885 London. Cornford found a strong positive correlation coefficient of +0.74, which suggested that class was becoming the most important single factor in deciding political allegiance. Like Pelling, Cornford believed that London was the exemplar of a national trend which by comparison with the 1867–1884 period the class alignment had become the dominant factor, although he appears to have acknowledged its growing importance from 1868 onwards.

Using Pelling's methods, Neal Blewett obtained similar results for all urban English constituencies but, according to Wald, his research involved impressionistic social descriptions from the local press and a certain degree of guesswork where borough boundaries did not correspond closely with constituencies<sup>12</sup>.

P. F. Clarke dated the emergence of economic issues associated with class politics from the onset of the Second Reform Act period (1867+), and thereby saw the 1886 home rule split as concealing electoral continuity. Though he was wary of interpreting the class-based London voting as indicative of a national trend, Clarke's own research in Lancashire demonstrated a decline in Conservative working-class support from the very end of the nineteenth century onwards in the cotton regions which, partly on account of a strong Anglican–protestant tradition, had previously gravitated towards Conservatism to a marked extent during the decades after the mid century. Clarke thus argued that Lancashire is the clearest area for such a transition

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12. Wald, pp32–35.

from religion to welfare as the core of electoral politics, rather than areas such as Yorkshire or Wales where Liberal support was already solid and class therefore did not show up directly as a party change<sup>13</sup>.

In a fairly recent publication (1983) Kenneth D. Wald offered a critique of analyses and theories of voter alignment, and discussed his own research on the period 1885–1910. Whilst acknowledging that 'revisionist' studies, by indicating continuity between pre and post 1918, had brought an influential corrective to the 'traditional' accounts that tended to portray the pre 1918 period as a matter of ancient religious conflicts and non-class influenced elections, Wald was somewhat sceptical of some of the methods used and the conclusions drawn from them. Like P. F. Clarke, Wald suggested that London may be atypical, partly because 'immigration' from without meant that London lacked the strong community life usually associated with religiosity (and particularly with nonconformity), and partly because London was unusually residentially segregated by social class. Both these features would have produced a fertile environment for the development of class-based politics. Employing a modification of the survey correspondents technique of Robert Alford, Wald indicated that the trend showed London class voting increased over the entire period, but the provinces bore the nature of a U-shaped curve, thereby demonstrating that London voting could not be generalised beyond the south-east. Furthermore Wald criticized the hasty conclusions concerning the primacy of class because the studies did not demonstrate that the class/party index was strong, nor did they consider the effect of other variables. Researching further on the London constituencies using a variety of social variables, such as Pelling's servants index, Wald compared the 1885–1910 figures with both his own and Miller's data for the 1955–70 period. Though he admitted to the crudity of the procedures, Wald stressed that the results confirmed that class alignment for the 1885 period did not approach the level evident in 1955–

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13. *Clarke, p51.*

70. By modern standards class had very little impact on the vote. Moreover, use of a wealth index in conjunction with local election results (1885–1910) in Bradford, Brighton, Norwich, Reading and Wolverhampton did not convince Wald of the existence of a class cleavage before World War One, although he conceded that more research was still needed<sup>14</sup>. This of course implies that no social class cleavage along electoral lines would have existed during the mid nineteenth century.

However, Wald did draw attention to a matter of greater importance in assessing electoral behaviour – the definition of 'class'<sup>15</sup>. Considerable confusion regarding the identity of relevant class groupings has seemingly been a perennial shortcoming among historical writers. The results of analyses on class voting depend considerably on where one draws the line between the middle-class and the working-class. It appears most studies have lent more or less towards the Weberian concept of class: i.e. class defined in economic terms (with or without 'consciousness'): and thus the unwary are inclined to make an arbitrary dividing line from a continuous spectrum of social variation, which may well not relate to the reality of the social structure. As Norman McCord has stressed, there is a need for a clear demonstration of the existence of discontinuities in the social spectrum which indicate a significantly different middle-class and working-class immediately on either side of such a defined breaking point. Indeed McCord was highly critical of the vagueness concerning the concept of class employed recently in works by such notable historians as E. Hobsbawm, Gareth S. Jones, and Dorothy Thompson<sup>16</sup>. But it is not just a question of the line of demarcation. Even when the working-class is appropriately identified divisions within it, depending to a great extent on levels of organisation, could have affected their political proclivities. As Wald discovered the organised (trade-union) workers were the most pro-Liberal/Labour, followed by other manual and industrial workers, whilst the unskilled manual workers, and the general

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14. Wald, pp37–52.

15. *Ibid*, p26.

16. McCord, (1985), pp410–419.

and non-agricultural labourers were more disposed to support the Conservative/Liberal Unionist party<sup>17</sup>. The key to a valid interpretation of class voting therefore lies in establishing a clear understanding of the socio-economic framework of the locality under study. This is especially vital for the mid nineteenth century when socio-economic hierarchies, like their politics, were much more localised than they eventually became.

Despite Wald's doubts regarding the pre-1918 class alignment he was not convinced by the widely supposed impact of religion on mass electoral behaviour. Seemingly, systematic analysis of denominational influence has received little attention from scholars – most having merely inferred its impact from illustrative data. From their 1963 sample survey of an elderly cohort Butler and Stokes found religious denomination more cohesive than class prior to 1918, thereby underscoring the claim, made in 1910, by Labour pioneer Keir Hardie that the mobilisation of the working-class on an economic basis was frustrated by church/chapel divisions. Thereafter the religious factor gave way progressively to the class factor. Butler and Stokes' findings thus confirmed the predictions based on the 'traditional' interpretation of English politics under the Third Reform Act, and pose a major challenge to the class interpretation. However Wald was convinced neither by the precise forms of analysis nor by the conclusions drawn. Butler and Stokes based their analysis on contemporary (1963) rather than pre 1918 party allegiance, and erstwhile-unenfranchised women were also included in their survey, which Wald believed would have produced a bias along religious lines. Wald himself presented data on the relationship between class, religion and first party preference for male respondents in the pre 1918 cohort, and his figures contradicted the religious interpretation of the pre 1918 party system. Though religious loyalties did exercise some influence, the paramount line of political division clearly ran between the social

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17. Wald, pp137-8.

classes: i.e. the middle-class of whatever religion mainly identified with the Conservatives, and the working-class of whatever religion mainly identified with the anti-Conservative parties. Thus on this basis class alignment dates well before 1918. But, as Wald stressed, the elderly 1963 respondents would have been relatively inexperienced voters before 1918 and therefore were an unreliable source from which to generalize to the larger population<sup>18</sup>.

Researching still further Wald embarked on a programme of ecological analysis: i.e. an attempt to relate electoral behaviour to the characteristics of the environment. He analysed the eight general elections between 1891 and 1911 in several constituencies, and in summary found a positive relationship between the proportion of Anglican clergy and the Conservative/Liberal Unionist vote, and a more consistent and stronger negative correlation between that party and the nonconformist presence. He also found the Unionist vote declined with increase in proportion of industrial workers, while, like P. F. Clarke, he attributed the positive relationship between the Roman Catholic presence and the Unionist vote to a low rate of R.C. enfranchisement coupled with local anti-R.C. sentiments on the part of working-class protestants<sup>19</sup>.

But though he believed his data established a more reliable picture of the electoral scene than did M. Kinnear in his 'The British Voter' (who nevertheless drew a similar conclusion of the importance of the religious variable in the 1910 election), Wald emphasized that the religion of an individual or group can act as a surrogate for some other form of social conflict. Thus though the political struggle appears to involve religious issues, religion may be merely an idiom for expressing conflicts that have their bases in social, economic or ethnic differences. Hence the stratification of the secular order often largely mirrored that of the spiritual order. A case in point is the

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18. *Ibid*, pp53-70.

19. *Ibid*, pp74-91.

often-noted importance of working-class nonconformity and religiosity in the rise of popular socialism. This has been dismissed as merely a culturally conditional mode of expression. Chapels served as training corps for young socialists because they were the only organisational models available to the working-class. In this case to treat religion as the causal factor is to miss the class cleavage which really inspired the drive for social change. But this may be an example of twentieth century secular bias which refuses to take religion seriously. However, Wald's final conclusion on his ecological analysis is that during the 1885–1918 period religion had a much stronger impact than social class on electoral behaviour. The power of the religious variable to explain the division of the vote persisted even in the face of controls for social class and regionalism, and was robust enough to cast doubt on the notion that it was simply a surrogate for social disadvantage. His results contrast with data of the same kind gathered for the 1918–29 period by Miller, whose class measures exceeded the religious variable in its effect on the Conservative vote. Wald's conclusion is thus akin to the 'traditional' view of electoral cleavage. But he went further to suggest the decline of the religious dimension was a consequence of the 1870 Education Act, which, on the side of nonconformity, decreased the prominence of religious instruction in the state schools, and thereby in time weakened the appeal of a Liberal party which for decades had been the political wing of puritan nonconformity. The outcome being that class became increasingly the only divisive factor left, and the Labour party was perceived as the most suitable vehicle for the pursuance of class politics. This theory is in accordance with the conclusion drawn by Richard Rose: i.e. that class is the basis on which persons divide politically only when all other differences, such as national, religious and racial, are exhausted. But working-class Conservatism survived because the Anglican schools remained independent of the boards and were thus not freed from the non-puritan outlook associated with the Church and the Conservative party<sup>20</sup>. This phenomenon was also observed by P. F.

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20. *Ibid*, pp207–254.

Clarke, who produced statistical evidence to demonstrate a close association between the proportion of children in voluntary schools and the Conservative vote in 1886 and 1895<sup>21</sup>. Moreover the 1902 Education Act, although re-awakening the question of religion and education and thereby making it an important issue in the 1906 general election, did not alter the situation in the long term. The voluntary schools were still able to give denominational instruction.

So, if overall the influence of social class is deemed beyond dispute for the post 1918 period, but debatable for the 1867–1918 period, what about the period of the First Reform Act (1832–67)? J. R. Vincent maintained that although there was a weak, but general and detectable, form of class between the higher and lower sections of the socio-economic stratum, he rejected the use of 'class' in the Weberian sense of the term, on the grounds that it did not correspond to any contemporary feeling (although Max Weber himself did not make consciousness a necessary condition for the existence of class in economic terms). He also rejected a Marxist explanation on the grounds that mid Victorian radicalism was not generated by the existence of a propertyless proletariat or capitalist modes of production. For Vincent political society was still essentially pre-industrial. In the main no group was linked to another by the cash nexus, or by relations arising from the means of production in any straightforward way. The characteristic relationship was that of vendor and customer rather than employer and employee. Thus economic conflicts over the material benefits of production, necessary for Marxian class conflict, were insignificant. He did concede that acute class differences between masters and men could arise, as at Oldham in 1852 and 1865, but these were short-lived and in general a strong unity existed between them – as was demonstrated at Norwich (1830), where the textile employees voted Liberal in just about the same proportion as their employers. Moreover even when differences arose, the masters were still to the left of the other

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21: Clarke, p46.

sections of the rich and influential. It was not until 1868, Vincent pointed out, that the voting patterns of some groups of railwaymen and labourers began to indicate a truly industrial pattern<sup>22</sup>.

However, as P. F. Clarke argued, the working-class were almost entirely outside the electoral system and therefore could have had no direct electoral effect (though this is not to deny that they could exert pressure on those who had the vote), even if class was particularly salient for the working-men before 1867<sup>23</sup>. Certainly E. P. Thompson believed that working-class consciousness had featured since the 1780–1832 period<sup>24</sup>, and, although he has been criticised by such historians as Craig Calhoun, who considered his notions too simplistic by failing to distinguish the basis of the working-class consciousness of the factory system from that of the contemporary non-factory artisans<sup>25</sup>, the rise of Chartism in the 1840s was a sign that such a class consciousness could exist, even though it was not a classic form of Marxian class conflict. But P. F. Clarke suggested it is possible to argue that the 1832 Reform Act defined a conscious working-class, so that the line was drawn in social consciousness by the franchise qualification. Therefore the middle-class was defined as those who gained the franchise in 1832. This supposition seemed to have been acknowledged during the debates on the Second Reform bill (1867). A. V. Dicey thought that the class consciousness of the working-men was due to them being treated as a separate class (i.e. by exclusion from the franchise), and the remedy lay in redressing the franchise. But as Clarke indicated, it was one thing to suggest that working-class consciousness fed upon political exclusion and another to infer that reform was a safe remedy. Indeed the belief that the politics of working-men must take a socialistic form and lead to the rule of the uneducated, seizure of the property of the rich, and ruinous class legislation, lay behind the opposition of Robert Lowe and Lord Cranborne to the 1867 Reform bill. However, Gallagher has

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22. Vincent (1967), p28.  
25. Calhoun, p20.

23. Clarke, pp42–43.

24. Thompson, pp12–25.



claimed that Lowe's opposition was based on utilitarian principles: i.e. that no radical change should even be contemplated unless it could be shown to be necessary in order to produce social peace, or a more stable regime, or a better House of Commons, and Lowe thought no such changes were necessary<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless most other Liberals believed that the growth in education and increasing respectability of the skilled working-class made it safe and sensible to extend the franchise to them<sup>27</sup>. As Harold Perkin put it, the reformers believed the working-class to have accepted so much of the entrepreneurial ideal of a class society based on capital and competition as to be trusted not to use their voting power to undermine it<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, Disraeli detected a Conservative working class further down the social side.

However, Vincent did accept that voting had a distinct social base, which was explicable in terms of Ralf Dahrendorf's interpretation of class:<sup>29</sup> i.e. a conflict between two groups ('operational collectivities' as Vincent termed them), not necessarily economic in basis, but always imbued with consciousness. Although Vincent's theorizing was very intricate and sociological in form, perhaps at a risk of oversimplification it can be viewed at a more concrete level as a mid-nineteenth century conflict, operating at a national level, between the rural/landowning/church class and the urban/bourgeois/nonconformist class. The former aiming to prevent changes in the structure of the political order, the latter determined to achieve changes, with both sides fully conscious of what they were trying to do. The urban/rural cleavage was especially salient in the East Midlands, where the manufacturers were primarily conscious of being in conflict with the great landowners of the surrounding countryside, and a similar situation typified the politics of Banbury. The anti-Corn Law agitation can doubtless be cited as an example of such conflict. But, although that struggle seems ostensibly economic, McCord stressed that the men in control of

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26. Gallagher, p148.  
29. Vincent (1967), pp28-30.

27. Clarke, pp34-35.

28. Perkin, p319.

the League were not moved solely by selfish economic motives, but also from an idealistic view of society<sup>30</sup>. These two classes formed important sections (though not the whole) of the Conservative and Liberal-radical parties respectively, although Vincent indicated that the division of voting along these 'class lines' was considerably less rigid than in the class divisions of the mid twentieth century: i.e. Liberal landowners and Tory craftsmen were produced in numbers, even though a majority of neither was ever secured. The towns thus were essentially Liberal, with their businessmen, shopkeepers and craftsmen united by a common social ethic and culture. The Conservative minority within the towns were associated in matters of business with the mainly Tory landed ruling class and were therefore rural intrusions from the Tory countryside and voted accordingly. An example are the lawyers. Being dependent on rural raw material the lawyers in Wakefield and Norwich were politically much further to the right of the upper-class in general there. It was probably similar in the case of wine merchants, who had an important rural clientele, but impossible to determine the extent to which customer influence swayed the political preferences of such a group. Nevertheless, Vincent did believe that at parliamentary level there was little to distinguish (socially) between Liberal and Conservative MPs<sup>31</sup>.

Vincent did perceive an anomalous pattern of Conservative voting among the labourers in the towns, thereby giving some credence to Disraeli's idea of an untapped Tory stratum lying beneath middle-class radicalism. Vincent attributed this phenomenon partly to their lack of literacy and leisure, which were necessary to the development of a radical political consciousness, and partly to their occasional competition with the radical elite immediately above them: whence ultimately their Toryism hardened into a deep-rooted habit<sup>32</sup>. However, from his study of Bury, Patrick Joyce repudiated the suggestion that popular Toryism was the preserve of a 'lumpenproletariat'<sup>33</sup>.

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30. McCord (1968), p30.  
33. Joyce, p211.

31. Vincent (1967), p15.

32. *Ibid*, p17.

As Heyck<sup>34</sup> quite rightly observed, Vincent did tend to make assertions without any attempt to follow them up with statistical analysis. This was notably the case in his 'Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted', in which he seems to have only made selective references to the pollbooks where convenient to back up his pre-established, albeit highly sophisticated, notions of electoral behaviour. For example he appears convinced that, with the possible exception of distinctly vertical hierarchical groups such as 'clergy' and 'officers', the occupational pattern of voting, over a wide range of crafts and manufacturers, was, due to their objective economic homogeneity, fundamentally homogeneous regardless of socio-economic status within the occupation. He focused on shoemakers, seeing the divergence between rich and poor shoemakers, in terms of both wealth and politics, as marginal compared to the difference between shoemakers in general and 'gentlemen' in general. Likewise he did not see the High Street grocers as having any overall effect on the voting behaviour of grocers in general. This point brings home the limitations in using pollbooks alone to determine the socio-economic status of individuals. As T. J. Nossiter<sup>35</sup> commented it would clearly be beneficial to attempt a pollbook/census linkage to determine if significant variations occurred, which Vincent appears to admit and deny at one and the same time. Though Vincent generally doubted the value of the census in providing evidence, he admitted that Leicester numbered among the exceptions wherein confident distinctions, say between employer and employed, could be made. He was probably unwise to refer to 'gentlemen in general' for pollbook/census linkages do indicate that the pollbook occupation of 'gentleman' does not necessarily entail membership of the 'gentry' as it often does in the colloquial sense of the term. Also Vincent seemed to display a certain arbitrariness in identifying the bulk of the enfranchised working-class as hand workers, such as tailors and shoemakers, whom he agreed did not differ in terms of wealth from the

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34. Heyck, p71.

35. Nossiter, p176.

middle-class shopkeepers, but, more to the point, are not always readily distinguishable from those engaged in the retail trade<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore he asserted that few textile workers were enfranchised before 1868<sup>37</sup>. He presumably had never heard of the framework-knitters, whom not only formed an important section of the mid nineteenth century Leicester electorate, but are readily distinguishable from the middle-class retailers.

T. J. Nossiter, in his study of the North-East (1832-74), made a distinction between the Whig and radical sections of the Liberal party, and concluded that the social basis of radicalism was the 'shopocracy': i.e. the retailers, especially those engaged in the food and clothing trades, who had the ability, motivation and opportunity to play an organisational role in radical politics, but whom have been dismissed by labour historians as petty bourgeois, and by 'aristocratic' historians as small fry. He suggested that these retailers, owning little more than the product of their own labour, were actually or potentially members of the proletariat, and that their marginality within the social-class structure heightened their political consciousness. Moreover the shopkeeper, unlike the craftsman, was primarily concerned with sale rather than making of goods. Therefore his job called for a range of skills rather than one specific one, and his orientation was to the customer, not the craft. Thus his special ability to handle customers and commercial travellers, often a middle-class and upper middle-class clientele, and his clerical and organisational ability gave him the necessary expertise to lead the radical movement. The shopocracy were nevertheless supported by the artisans<sup>38</sup>.

Election results in the North-East indicated a marked difference in social class between the ratepayer-radical vote and the Whig vote. In Tyneside (1860) and subsequently confirmed in the study of Gateshead (1852) the radicals received nearly

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36. Vincent (1967), pp6-9.

37. Vincent (1976), p81.

38. Nossiter, pp144-147.

two-thirds of their votes from the retailers, whilst the Whigs were predominantly supported by the upper and professional classes. In contrast the Conservatives were more nearly representative of the electorate as a whole, despite a tendency to draw somewhat more support from the upper-classes, the older free trades, the Church and the shipping interest. Nossiter did add, however, that the better-off varied in their support between the Whigs and Conservatives from city to city. The enfranchised working-class, delineated by Nossiter as freemen voters as against the lower middle-class £10 householders, in the 1832 Newcastle election appeared to have given markedly less support to the ratepayer-radicals. This feature was coupled with the scant support given to the working-class Northern Reform Union candidate, P. A. Taylor (later M.P. for Leicester). Nossiter deemed this to have been the outcome of the little part played by the labour aristocracy in electoral radicalism, which was itself due to a lack of working-class facilities among what was anyway a largely unenfranchised class. But he also noted that there was much less basis for a class war between capital and labour at the polls than for a status struggle between the lower and upper middle-class, although he does not explain clearly why<sup>39</sup>.

But although occupation was the major determinant of voting behaviour in the reformed electorate, Nossiter highlighted another phenomenon which is widely believed to have affected electoral behaviour during the period of the First Reform Act – 'Influence'. He detected an increase in Conservative support among the major occupational groups as influence from the Conservative interest grew. Even so, with the exception of the shipping interest, influence never entirely destroyed the impact of occupation as a social determinant, but merely limited it. Nossiter did note, however, that the evidence suggests a marked sensitivity to the political complexion of the immediate neighbourhood, presumably due to the influence of the local magnates. But although the trend was that the lower down the scale a voter's occupation was,

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39. *Ibid*, pp148–168.

the more likely he was to incline to the district's politics, the professional classes were not immune from this local influence. However, exceptions to this were those sectors of the wider upper-class society which were influential in their own right: – the gentry, clergy and manufacturers of county Durham. For example Conservative clergy were found in areas of Whig patronage: Liberal manufacturers in areas of Conservative patronage<sup>40</sup>.

The above brings attention to a model of electoral behaviour which has aroused scholarly controversy. It was D. C. Moore, one of the very few researchers to place his findings into a theoretical structure, who advanced the 'Deference Community' as an electoral model: i.e. that groups of individuals linked through occupation, residency, or other interests acknowledged a limited number of individuals as their social, economic and ideological leaders, who effectively represented electoral opinion which was then registered by the mass of the electorate. He used pollbook data which suggested that at least for rural constituencies before 1867 group networks were stronger than the ties of social status, and more apparent than evidence that electors voted only for their particular interests (as the Benthamites believed)<sup>41</sup>. In fact, Moore believed that the 1832 Reform Act was deliberately framed in a manner to restore local hierarchical community influence and thus the cohesion of society: eg. the 'Chandos' clause and the adjustments made to town boundaries. However, without fundamentally disagreeing with Moore, J. R. Fisher used pollbooks to demonstrate the limitations of hierarchical influence, when there was disagreement in the rural community on what was felt to be an issue vital to its prosperity. Despite being one of the most aristocratic of the English counties, South Nottinghamshire witnessed the defeat of the Earl of Lincoln during the Corn Law crisis of 1846. Lincoln had by that time virtually abandoned protectionism, and owed his defeat to the virulent protectionism of the farmer voters. And, in 1851, Lord

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40. *Ibid*, pp168–172.

41. *Reproduced by Baer, p227.*

Newark was defeated due to residual protectionism among the rural tradesmen and craftsmen<sup>42</sup>. Further evidence indicating the limits of rural deference was apparent in Dr. Olney's research on 1852 Lincolnshire: there, of the forty-five major landowners in the division, only twenty-seven secured absolute support in one or more parishes on their estates. Richard Davis's research on Buckinghamshire showed landed deference considerably weaker than did Dr Olney<sup>43</sup>.

Moore attributed the decay of the deference community to industrialisation, urbanisation and migration which weakened the traditional social nexus and hierarchical relationships – voters thereafter being recruited by Victorian election managers directly, but as individuals rather than as members of a community<sup>44</sup>. But Moore has been challenged by Patrick Joyce, who argued that not only will the model fit urban settings (which Moore denied), but that political behaviour based upon communal ties is clearly discernible in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Joyce's research on Lancashire indicated that the consolidation of mechanised factory industry after 1850 was the occasion of class harmony rather than conflict. The family firm, territorial solidarity and trade-union activity coalesced to mediate the class system of factory society and secured the consolidation of the factory's domination over people's lives. This phenomenon was reflected in voting patterns and was seemingly not enforced by coercion. The 1868 pollbooks for Blackburn and Bury indicated that political allegiance to the factory employer was not significantly weakened when the operative was not one of his tenants. Joyce maintained that employer paternalism only decayed around the turn of the century due to a combination of urban growth, transportation developments, surburbinisation (which distanced 'masters' from 'men') and the decay of private factory ownership – changes which were chronologically close to the onset of class voting in parliamentary elections (1900–1910). Joyce did concede, however, that paternalism channelled

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42. Fisher, pp155–165.

43. Davis, p151.

44. Moore (1976), p324.

rather than eclipsed class conflict, and that a very different outlook prevailed in the West Riding where, due to continuation of the handworking tradition and consequential absence of a cultural sphere of community politics, the politics of the Chartist inheritance continued powerfully into the 1850s and '60s<sup>45</sup>.

Examining voting behaviour in Victorian London, Marc B. Baer considered the London patterns quite similar to those discovered in Lancashire by Joyce. A case in point was the 1860 by-election in Southwark when G. Scovell, a wealthy employer of undisputed influence, was defeated by fellow Liberal, A. H. Layard. Though Scovell easily won the district where his workforce was located he was well beaten in two populous districts. Layard was recruited by many local employers to run against Scovell, and these allowed their workmen time off to listen to Layard: company bands being used to whip up enthusiasm – parades – torchlight processions, but with no evidence of coercion. Baer indicated that the pattern was mirrored elsewhere in London, but he stressed that the communal groups were not activated solely as a result of their internal dynamics. Equally important was the level of political organisation<sup>46</sup>.

Baer's comment concerning political organisation points to a grey area of the political scene lying between 'respectable' deference and influence, and 'less respectable' bribery. Much political activity centred around registration procedures. As D. C. Moore noted, it was each manager's job when a contest occurred to try to strengthen the favourably orientated nexus and to destroy the unfavourable<sup>47</sup>. And there was growing concern in the 1850s and '60s that electoral corruption, often centred around registration procedure, was growing. Gallagher claimed that the level of corruption in the 1852 general election led not only to the 1854 Corrupt Practices Act but even partly accounted for the decision to extend the franchise in 1867<sup>48</sup>. Acceptance of

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45. Joyce, pp320–321 (Moore accepted Joyce's criticism: see Moore (1976), p15). 46. Moore (1974), p118.

48. Gallagher, pp154–163.

Baer, pp232–234.



bribes seems to have been particularly the preserve of the lower sections of the social stratum, as in the case of the Leicester stockinger outvoters who were well plied with liquor before being brought by carriage to the poll<sup>49</sup>. Indeed the nineteenth century statistician, Newmarch, drew attention in 1857 to the problem, and pointed out that the 1832 Reform bill originally intended to disqualify all the freemen voters on the grounds of their proneness to bribery<sup>50</sup>. In the twenty years after 1832 there were 185 official inquiries into alleged bribery. There was evidence too of the even less respectable phenomenon of coercion. Gash recorded that the Leicester textile manufacturers, during periods of slack trade, threatened to remove their employees' frames<sup>51</sup>. Nossiter indicated that Lord Londonderry coerced his tenants, and the 1874 South Durham and Durham city elections were declared void due to widespread violence and intimidation of Conservative voters, thereby demonstrating that corruption was not entirely an outcome of open voting<sup>52</sup>. However, Vincent did not think that corruption made much impact on election results overall; rather it may on balance have coincided with a general preference by voters and simply have intensified or revealed what was always latent<sup>53</sup>. In fact most modern historians do not see the practice of 'treating' as anything other than a more innocent form of hospitality and thus represent a shift since the time of Charles Seymour's (1915) study of the nineteenth century electoral system, which leaned on the effects of various forms of corruption up till 1883<sup>54</sup>.

The growth of a temperance lobby, principally nonconformist, brought the Liberal party into conflict with the drink trade during the late 1850s and early '60s when the trade consequently became increasingly identified with the Conservative party. But Vincent's research on Rochdale (1841) and Stockport (1847) suggests that, prior to this development, the 'beersellers' were proportionately more Liberal than their 'publican' counterparts: the Liberalism of the beersellers ceasing in 1857 when the leading Congregationalist Liberal M.P., E. Miall, failed to support a bill deemed to be in their interests, promoted by Henry Berkeley<sup>55</sup>. The Hammond's observed that the

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49. Gash, p139.

51. Gash, p137.

54. Clarke, p36.

50. Newmarch, p175.

52. Nossiter, pp101-102.

55. Vincent (1976), p97.

53. Vincent (1967), p11.

beershops, which proliferated with the passing of the Beer Act of 1830, seem to have been a preserve of the working-class and tended to provide a convenient focus for attack by the Church during the 1830s and '40s<sup>56</sup>. But whether or not this accounts for their relative radicalism, it seems clear that to some extent electoral division along social class lines was a feature of the drink trade until 1857. Thereafter the trade became what Vincent described as the perfect example of a 'pressure group': i.e. a sharply defined group of people organised to defend their economic interest by rational electoral pressure, uninvolved in general political issues and without ideological overtones. Apart from the R.C. Church, the drink trade was unique in operating this way – intelligently manipulating the traditional party system<sup>57</sup>.

Virtually all historical writers have pointed to the importance of religion in party political life during the period of the First Reform Act. As Walter Arnstein reflected, it was the religious issue in its various manifestations that was fundamental in defining party difference and provided the element of continuity from the 1680s to the 1910s<sup>58</sup>. And, as K. Theodore Hoppen exclaimed: 'Religious issues played a large part in many English elections: until well after 1885 to know an Englishman's denomination was to know perhaps his most important electoral characteristic'<sup>59</sup>. Further, J. P. Parry has argued that religious issues were the paramount concern of politics after 1832 because they provided the ideological basis on which politicians could appeal to the electorate. Thus religious issues were far more important than secular issues both in dividing Liberal from Conservative and Liberal from Liberal<sup>60</sup>. But the problem lies in proving it. As Nossiter pointed out the church/chapel membership records are an unreliable source, either in an analysis of individuals (i.e. linking individuals to pollbook information) or in an aggregate statistical analysis. This is due not only to the erratic survival of such records but also on account of what they do not reveal, such as the personal evaluation of the individual's religious allegiance

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56. Hammond, pp144–167 and p219.

57. Vincent (1967), pp17–18, 58.

60. Bernstein, p86.

Arnstein. p143.

59. Hoppen, p213.

vis-a-vis his other social reference points for voting. The 1851 religious census is also problematical since it refers to registration districts rather than parliamentary constituencies, and relates to the whole population rather than just enfranchised adult males. Perhaps the best source, at least for the later part of the period, is the school board elections of 1871. Some of these results survive broken down by wards and could thus be linked on an aggregate basis to the 1868 parliamentary elections, which likewise were broken down by wards.

Using the latter source Nossiter investigated Leeds, Newcastle and Sunderland. In the case of Leeds, despite the addition of working-class voters, he found a significant relationship between the rank orders in twenty districts. The five most Anglican districts in 1871 were also the five most Conservative in 1868, albeit in a slightly different order. At the bottom of the rank order three of the five least Anglican districts were among the five most hostile to the Conservatives. Likewise in Newcastle political rankings were essentially similar to religious ones, both before the 1867 Reform Act and after. However, the 1868 Sunderland election, which comprised a straight fight between a nonconformist radical and a Whig Anglican, did not produce a statistically significant result. Generally Nossiter found that in districts where dissent was strong the radicals gained more support in 1868. But the converse was not confirmed, and he attributed this to factors operating in the industrial districts, such as membership of work, occupation and trade union grouping, which effectively diluted the influence of religious affiliation. On balance he considered that whilst the three examples supported the conventional view that religion was contemporarily an important factor in voting behaviour, they also indicated that religion could, as Wald believed<sup>61</sup>, interact with other social determinants in a complex way to produce the final election result. Nossiter's overall conclusion was that although several factors undoubtedly interacted to determine

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61. Wald, pp108-120.

electoral behaviour, further extensive research was still needed to evaluate their relative importance, although he predicted that the occupational factor was likely to prove particularly significant<sup>62</sup>.

Maybe Nossiter's comment, that in the longer term the indifference of the working-class towards institutional religion was to render religion of decreasing political importance, highlights the lynch-pin of the development of class voting in Britain. The 1851 religious census showed that a majority of the working-class were undoubtedly indifferent towards religion by the mid nineteenth century, and the broad consensus among historians and political scientists appears to be that a social class cleavage along electoral lines became increasingly significant as the franchise was progressively extended to the working-class. If, all other things being equal, the 1918 franchise provisions had been put into effect in say 1850, would that alone have generated a rapid development of class-based politics regardless of all other changes which occurred between the mid nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries? There seems to be a need therefore for further research on those mid nineteenth century urban constituencies which contained relatively high proportions of working-class voters. Leicester is such a place.

In their research on mid twentieth century electoral behaviour, Butler and Stokes discovered that those casting their first vote at a time when one party is especially dominant tend to support that party to a greater extent than older voters. Thus 61% of new electors voted Labour in 1945, the year of that party's zenith, whilst only 48% did so in the 1955 election when the Conservatives were dominant. Moreover these voters tended to stay with their original dominant choice throughout their voting lives – as was apparent in the 1964 general election. Among those who first voted in the Labour years of 1945 and 1950 the proportion voting Labour in 1964 totalled 60%:

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62. Nossiter, pp174–176.

*Note:* From a Leicester Newspaper source in 1834, Halevy found very marked positive correlations between the Church and the Tory vote, and between Dissent and the Liberal vote in the 1833 Election. (See Halevy, p63).

among those who first voted in the Conservative years of 1951, 1955 and 1959 only 53% voted Labour in 1964. Although the results did not produce the close correlation observed between party choice of individuals and their parents, Butler and Stokes nevertheless concluded that their findings demonstrated the political generation phenomenon<sup>63</sup>.

Actually, compared to investigations into social class, possible influences of political generation on electoral behaviour have received but little attention from scholars. But P. F. Clarke, commenting upon studies of Banbury and Glossop, claimed the results suggested that the party loyalties of the older voters were conditioned by the past rather than the present, with the major implication that the Conservatism of a strong section of the working-class represented the allegiance of a generation brought up before the modern Labour party emerged. As successive age-cohorts became voters Labour had in this way come to occupy more and more of its natural ground<sup>64</sup>.

Likewise, in his hypothesis to explain the rise of a class-based Labour party, Wald pointed to generational influences coupled with parental influences to account for the pace of the decreasing salience of puritan nonconformity, and thereby the change in party fortunes<sup>65</sup>. But he did appear to err in suggesting that a young person from a working-class home, where the father was probably unenfranchised, would in consequence not receive partisan cues. Wald clearly assumed that anyone unqualified to vote would have entertained no party political preferences, which seems highly unlikely. In his analysis of Oldham politics during the post-reform period, J. Foster has shown quite clearly how the non-voters could exert influence through mass organisation<sup>66</sup>. If Wald's supposition was true it would seriously inhibit any research on electoral generations during the 1832-1918 period, since not all electors became eligible to vote at twenty-one years of age. When Butler and

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63. Butler and Stokes, pp48-66. 64. Foster, pp149-160.

Clarke, p54.

65. Wald, pp223-254.

Stokes spoke of those entering the electorate at a specific point in time, they were referring to specific age groups who had all shared common experiences. It would be unreasonable to suppose that a mid nineteenth century elector, casting his first vote – say at the age of sixty-one – would have been politically conditioned in the same way as a twenty-one year old voting for the first time in the same election. Rather it seems more likely that the elderly new voter would, all other things being equal, have been at one with those in his own age-group who had become enfranchised at various earlier stages in life.

Even so, this is not to deny that new voters, drawn from across the age spectrum, produced important patterns of electoral support. In their study of local elections in Cambridge (1832–68) Mitchell and Cornford observed a strikingly high level of partisan stability over time: eg. only 8.8% of those entering the electorate in 1832 ever gave a vote of any kind, single or split, for the party other than the one for which they voted initially in the period up to 1852. The Cambridge parliamentary electoral sphere witnessed a similar overall pattern, although *temporary* changes of party allegiance did occur, as in the 1847 general election when many Conservative voters either abstained or voted Liberal in the aftermath of the Corn Law crisis. By 1852 83% of the 1845 election Conservative voters had returned to their old partisanship, and even more followed in subsequent elections. The possible implications of this phenomenon were, however, modified by a rapid turnover in the electorate: eg. of the 290 new voters in 1837, only 36 remained in 1868<sup>67</sup>.

Nossiter did not appear perturbed by the varying age of new voters in his study of certain towns and cities of northern England. He examined the common supposition that the older a voter is, the more he had to lose by change (at least among the middle-classes) and the less likely he was, therefore, to support radicalism. (This

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67. Mitchell and Cornford, pp266–271.

so-called 'senescence hypothesis' is sometimes hinged on the notion of a natural propensity on the part of the young to favour change, which diminishes with age, regardless of economic considerations). Linking pollbook data for the 1852 general election with the 1851 census, he found little in it; the average age of electors of each party in Bradford, Gateshead, Hull and Leeds varied little around forty-four. Butler and Stokes too rejected the senescence hypothesis as statistically unsound<sup>68</sup>. But Nossiter stressed that the similarity in average age masked a far more interesting difference in the age structure of party support. Different age groups tended to vote disproportionately for one party rather than another – which parallels modern findings of generational patterns of voting rooted in electors' early political experiences. In two cases, Gateshead and Leeds, the differences were statistically significant, but even the others showed marked variations in voting behaviour. Nossiter predicted that those who became politically conscious (and for Nossiter that occurred at the age of seventeen) during the reform period of 1828–32 might prefer the Liberals for the rest of their lives: those starting during the Conservative revival of the 1830s might incline towards the Conservative party. Both predictions were notably confirmed in his analysis<sup>69</sup>.

It appears that the phenomenon of political generation offers considerable scope for further analysis, given the availability of pollbook data and appropriate census schedules. But, as Mitchell and Cornford pointed out, electoral data by itself can suggest interesting questions and can isolate interesting groups of voters, but one has to look to social data and the contemporary record of political activity, debate and controversy to suggest why individuals or groups behaved as they did<sup>70</sup>.

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68. Butler and Stokes, pp62–64. 69.

Nossiter, pp173–4.

70. Mitchell and Cornford, p263.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Leicester 1832-67*

#### *Local Government – Industry – Working Class Politics*

a. **Local Government**

For many decades prior to the Municipal and Corporations Act (1835) the Borough of Leicester corporation was becoming increasingly the focus of political contention. This development was largely due to the prevalence of nonconformity among the local leading manufacturers and shopkeepers<sup>1</sup>. Around 1832 the most influential group of nonconformists were the liberal Presbyterians (Unitarians) whose 'Great Meeting' Chapel in East Bond Street had been established in the early eighteenth century. This Chapel was attended by the most intelligent, active and liberal citizens of the town, such as the important local textile industrialists the Brewins and the Coltmans<sup>2</sup>. Leicester's 'Great Meeting' was typical of Unitarian academies elsewhere as a centre of social and religious enlightenment, spreading knowledge of political theory and popular science. Theologically, Unitarianism represented the extreme left and contemporarily had no more in common with other nonconformist sects than with the Church of England. Of the remainder of Leicester's nonconformity the Baptists were the most numerous, whilst there was a new Independent (Congregationalist) Chapel which eventually settled at premises in Bond Street. However, in 1832 these two sects were not as notable for political leadership as they later became.

But the political discord between corporation and nonconformity was perhaps not just a straightforward result of the widespread age-old Anglican hatred of

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1. Patterson, p27.

2. Ellis, p99.



dissent. For many years the Tory corporation had resisted attempts by the county Whig nobles, the Duke of Rutland and the Earl of Stamford, to secure control of the borough. Consequently there arose an expression of municipal independence which in turn fortified a sentiment of devotion to the Anglican Church. Inevitably the corporation encountered opposition from the nonconformist hosiers and some Church Whigs. Thus overall the corporation was faced with an alliance of industrial, nonconformist and aristocratic influence – essentially a local phenomenon not mirrored in national politics. However, the nonconformist/Whig alliance broke up after 1790 when developments in France, and their implications for England, caused the Whigs to join the Tories. But a legacy remained, for, whereas in some towns experiencing sectarian feeling the Test and Corporations Acts were not enforced against dissenters, the extreme Anglican nature of the Leicester magistracy and municipal authority was uncompromising. Thus until 1828 the local hosiers and worsted spinners were denied civic office, with consequential bitter resentment. Moreover the old corporation was by the early nineteenth century beginning to show sympathy with the industrial working-classes during employers' disputes – a phenomenon which formed an element of nineteenth century Tory policy in general (evident in the work of Richard Oastler and Lord Ashley, and in the novels of Disraeli), resulting in the gradual development of an explosive situation<sup>3</sup>.

Leicesters' reform party had emerged from the war-period with growing strength and solidarity, possessing an effective organ in the weekly publication, 'Leicester Chronicle', which made municipal reform probable<sup>4</sup>. Competent leadership was provided by groups of frequently related families, wealthy merchants and manufacturers – considerable employers of labour,

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3. *Patterson, p28.*

4. *Victoria, p147.*

almost all dissenters and mostly Unitarians. Some, like the Pareses and Thomas Paget, were in the process of passing into the ranks of the lesser gentry. Others, like Coltman, Robert Brewin and the Whetstones, were manufacturers of the second and third generation – men of established standing in the town's large nonconformist community. In addition, there were those of a more self-made type and frequently of more advanced views, like John and William Biggs. But around 1832 shades and differences of opinion among them were concealed by the common struggle against the corporation. In the field of national politics all agreed on parliamentary reform, religious equality, a free press, extension of popular education, Corn Law repeal or modification, and slavery abolition.

Although the 1832 Reform bill fell short of their aspirations, the Leicester Liberals welcomed it, calling upon reformers of all shades and classes to unite in its support. But, in contrast with the leading Whigs, like Lord John Russell who even as late as 1838 publicly regarded the 1832 measures as final, the local Liberals saw the 1832 reforms as a means to an end for further reforms including municipal reform, further measures of parliamentary reform, the extinction of tithes and Church rates, and a general removal of remaining dissenters' disabilities. Patterson notes that these activities form an example of that 'constant and active pressure from without', exercised upon the legislature and the two ancient and traditional parties by middle-class opinion in the larger industrial towns, which did so much to bring about the reforms of the first half of the nineteenth century. However, there were already hints of the local cleavage between right and left wings that was to come in later years.

After the 1832 Reform Act the Leicester radicals petitioned Parliament against borough rate increases imposed by the corporation (1833). The row continued to be kept predominantly before the notice of Parliament, thereby forming an important advance towards the modernisation of municipal government<sup>5</sup>. In return, the pro-corporation Leicester Conservative newspaper, 'Leicester Journal', accused the reformers of trying to separate Church and state and make their own 'low-bred, ill-educated, soi-disant' clergy equal in point of rank and consequence to those of the Church of England<sup>6</sup>. However, the 'Journal' took care to exonerate the Wesleyan Methodists who carefully maintained a policy of political quietism, or, in effect, conservatism, which was laid down by the governing body of the sect.

The commission set up by the Whig government to inquire into the municipal corporations reported in 1835. The report appeared to err on the side of severity, especially in its over-ready acceptance of complaints against the magistrates' administration of justice. Almost everything which had gone amiss in Leicester was blamed upon the corporation. It was, in short, a party document, but nevertheless many of its charges were substantially justified<sup>7</sup>: indeed Sidney and Beatrice Webb later described pre-1835 Leicester as the 'worst governed town in the country'<sup>8</sup>. Lord John Russell's bill made a specific reference to Leicester as an example of corporate extravagance, corruption (of which there was much evidence) and misuse of charitable endowments. As Norman Gash points out the Leicester corporation was especially notorious for the political use it made of its public funds. It controlled various charitable and trust monies: eg. the Sir Thomas White fund of £18,000 was lent out in sums of £100 for nine years without interest to 'deserving tradesmen', together with similar patronage to the Green Coat School (where free places with

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5. *Patterson, p200.*  
8. *Hammond, p44.*

6. *Victoria, p149.*

7. *Patterson, pp206-209.*

clothing were gifts of the corporation), and the nominations to the Trinity Hospital. All these were used as political instruments to secure votes and it was reckoned that in Leicester, where one-fifth of the electorate was in any case regarded as venal, the corporation controlled another 6-700 votes besides. The same misuse of charitable endowments went on at Ipswich, Coventry and Hereford<sup>9</sup>. The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act swept away the old order and facilitated the immediate transfer of power to the new classes, by providing for new councils elected by all rate-paying householders of at least three years residence.

The new Leicester council which took office in January 1836 had a large Liberal/nonconformist majority: i.e. - two thirds were dissenters and thirty-eight Liberals were returned as against four Tories. This result established the pattern of Liberal domination of the local council which was to last for the rest of the nineteenth century. Although there was in fact little change in terms of social status the new council was recruited from a much wider circle, including especially the large class of dissenting hosiers. Also for several years there was a tendency towards a Unitarian oligarchy indicated by the Unitarian membership of the first seven mayors of the new council<sup>10</sup>.

Patterson points out that the nineteenth century ascendancy of nonconformity in Leicester was comparable on a rather smaller scale to the Birmingham of Joseph Chamberlain. Whereas the counties and market towns were still ruled and judged by the country gentlemen, to whom all gave deference, the cities were governed by a totally different type of person in accordance with a very different scale of social values which, whether middle or working-class, were

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9. Gash, p173.

10. Victoria, p251.

essentially democratic. These contrasting features were epitomised in Conservative Leicestershire and Liberal Leicester.

The question soon arose for the new Leicester council as to whether it should become involved in contemporary political agitation or be neutral. The old corporation was notoriously Tory-inclined: a late example being its petition to Parliament opposing the Reform bill during 1831–32. The radical wing of the new council led by Winks and supported by the marginally more moderate John and William Biggs thought it should be party-political, especially in the field of supporting dissenters' grievances. The moderate Liberal faction led by Paget, Stokes and Whetstone took the opposite view, and the alignment of leaders foreshadowed exactly the schism of the late 1840s and 1850s<sup>11</sup>.

The Leicester Liberal 'revolution' of 1835–6 was still incomplete so long as the new board of guardians, set up in accordance with the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, remained a Conservative stronghold<sup>12</sup>. This phenomenon was the outcome of the system of voting (invariably conducted along party lines) for candidates to the board – a system which actually lasted until 1894<sup>13</sup>. All owners and occupiers of rateable property could vote, but additional votes were granted in proportion to rateable value up to a maximum of six as owner and six as occupier: i.e. twelve in all. Thus in St. Margaret's parish the cumulative votes established a Conservative majority on the board of guardians in what was otherwise a strongly radical parish. But there is evidence of co-operation between Liberals and Conservatives on the board in attempts to cope with the acute poverty of the 1840s. However, change came about a decade later, partly due to the Liberals' successful revision of the voters lists, but also due to revelations of mismanagement and corruption.

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11. *Patterson*, pp213–222.

12. *Ibid*, p225.

13. *Hammond*, p70.

The outcome was a Liberal landslide victory, except in the parish of St. Martin, in the 1845 board of guardians election, and henceforth the Liberals maintained a solid grip on the board as on the town council. Even so it should be pointed out that in practice the board under Liberal control was rather less 'liberal' than it was earlier, for in 1849 it decided for the first time to implement the 'workhouse test' for all applicants for relief. The decision was put into effect, albeit gradually, when a new purpose-built workhouse was opened in 1851 although, despite a depression during 1857–8, it was never put to so severe a test as would have been the case had it been implemented during the rather more serious depressions in the 1840s<sup>14</sup>. But even so it offers evidence at a local level of the ascendancy of Benthamite ideals on Liberal thought whereby the theory of dependence and protection of the patriarchal or paternal system (and with it the old Tory notions of charity) had given way to manly self-respect, responsibility and ambition to rise in social status, which were believed to be the chief sources of energy and drive behind the progress of society. This appealed most powerfully to both the moral self-righteousness and the material self-interest of the middle-class<sup>15</sup>.

During the late 1830s and 1840s the reform party in Leicester was becoming more radical. According to Patterson this was due to the influx of younger men of more advanced outlook who had a better grasp of the techniques of organisation required than the older leaders, although a Conservative society, supported by the 'Leicester Journal', was also operational. The men whose radicalism stemmed from the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man were slowly giving ground to those who derived theirs from Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill (although in some ways the former had been more extreme than the latter). However, the moment of cleavage between

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14. *Victoria*, p259.

15. *Perkin*, p224.

right and left wings of the middle class reformers was still some distance away. The whole Leicester Liberal party stood to the left of Whiggism: i.e.: they wanted further parliamentary reform and the removal of remaining nonconformist disabilities.

A particular nonconformist grievance was the compulsory payment of Church rates, and this issue was to dominate municipal politics in Leicester until 1849. In 1834 the Whig ministry proposed, and swiftly abandoned, a scheme to substitute an annual treasury grant of £¼m. In any case, the plan would still have entailed compulsory support for the Established Church via taxation. Similarly in 1837 a government scheme for abolishing Church rates was dropped. The question for Leicester's large dissenting community was the line of action to overcome the status quo. But although a number of individuals were prosecuted for outright refusal to pay the levy, notably the draper William Baines<sup>16</sup> who was eventually imprisoned for non-payment in 1841, the general consensus of opinion during the early stages was that over-reaction might bring about the return of a Conservative government. It soon became clear to all, as in other towns like Leicester, that the abolition of Church rates could only be achieved by securing dissenter majorities in the vestries of the individual parishes. Actually by 1836 only two out of the five parish vestries, St. Margaret's and St. Martin's, were Conservative controlled, but these, anxious to avenge local government defeat, were determined to enforce payment. Nevertheless, despite stress laid by important factions of the local reform party – the moderates under Paget and Whetstone, and the somewhat more radical J. and W. Biggs – that the law must be upheld until it could be changed, the ultra-radical faction demanded stronger action<sup>17</sup>. This latter section of the party was led significantly by the Baptists who from the later

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16. Fraser, p49.

17. Victoria, p207.

1830s, together with the Independents, were supplanting the Unitarians in Leicester's local government reformist politics and becoming what Patterson calls the 'shock troops' of local radicalism. One important inspiring leader was the Rev. J. P. Mursell of Harvey Lane Baptist Chapel, who considered the Church of England to be the representation of privilege and thus its disestablishment was necessary for the very salvation of its own soul. He was seemingly not alone in his views, for Patterson suggests that Leicester was the cradle of the disestablishment movement which, though ultimately unsuccessful, was for thirty years a factor to be reckoned with in the religious and political life of the country. Equally vehement was E. T. Miall, minister of Bond Street Independent Chapel. The faction was supported by the 'Leicestershire Mercury', a newspaper founded in 1836 (aided by the reduction of stamp duty), which scorned the moderate men although it chose to deny the ultra-radical label, rather claiming its politics akin to those of the parliamentary Liberals – Durham, Brougham, Hume, O'Connell and Molesworth. But opposition to Church rates was widespread nationwide, and in Leicester even the Wesleyan Methodist laity openly revolted against their ministers' sympathies with the Anglican Church. A Church Rate Abolition Society of 1836 was soon deemed too timid and inactive, especially in Leicester. This local stance was praised by the London newspapers, the 'Sun' and the 'Morning Advertiser' – the latter paper expressing a wish that the Leicester leaders could be transferred to London to spur on the lukewarm heads of nonconformity there. The contest ended locally in 1849 when the St. Martin's vestry fell under dissenting control, four years after St. Margaret's. Thenceforth all the town's parishes substituted voluntary for compulsory payment, although it was not until 1868 that Church rates were abolished by law<sup>18</sup>.

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18. Patterson, p259.



It seems that the rise of ultra-radicalism was not purely a sectarian phenomenon, for the Rev. Miall in 1841, having by then left Leicester, established and edited 'The Nonconformist' in which he attacked aristocratic government and class legislation: i.e. Miall was also an advanced radical in politics<sup>19</sup>.

All shades of local radical opinion united in protest at Graham's Factory bill (1843), which sought a reduction in hours worked by children in factories coupled with a scheme for compulsory, part-time education of factory children under the direction of the Established Church. Though many radicals supported the principle of education, the Rev. Mursell and his supporters objected to any compulsion or interference by the state in matters of education. Within Parliament John Bright, concerned at the loss of dissenting support, opposed this proposed new scheme of 'parson education'. But Richard Cobden refused to be cajoled or threatened by his dissenting supporters into opposing the proposal. He had first entered public life as an advocate of education and now refused to be false to his principles<sup>20</sup>. The education provisions were removed from Graham's bill in 1844. There was similar antipathy on the part of militant dissent towards the 1870 Education bill. They were not inclined to support Liberals in 1874 who had countenanced such a seemingly pro-Anglican measure<sup>21</sup>.

General radical antipathy towards progressive liberalising proposals when they appeared to conflict with the interests and ideals of nonconformity was not confined to Graham's bill. A marked example of the adoption of a non-liberal stance occurred in 1845 when Peel's government announced its

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19. *Ibid*, p255.

20. McCord (1968), p190.

21. Southgate, p350.

intention to increase the grant to the leading Roman Catholic seminary at Maynooth. The plan provoked a widespread outburst of wrath and anti-papal sentiment, mirroring the late 1820s when the prospect of R.C. emancipation became more important locally than the repeal of the Test and Corporations Acts. However, in Leicester Mursell and the leading radicals tried to dissociate their opposition to the Maynooth grant from the taint of 'no popery' fanaticism, whilst Cobden again went against the tide by supporting the grant<sup>22</sup>.

The 1850s and 1860s appear to have been a relatively unimportant period in the sphere of Leicester's municipal politics. There are several possible explanations for this. The major causes of sectarian discontent had largely disappeared, the Liberal reformists were then in control of the local institutions of authority, and the radicals by this time (possibly influenced by the European liberal revolutions of 1848) were again thinking in terms of extensions to the suffrage. For its part Lord Russell's aristocratic Whig ministry sought to stave off radical political reform for as long as possible by declaring that 'social questions' must have priority: i.e. Russell tried to focus attention on education and sanitary conditions, which would not involve too much transformation of the established order. In fact the relatively uncontentious task of improving the town's amenities was precisely what the municipal authority embarked upon, although even this demonstrated the widening division in the local Liberal party – the 'economists' under Whetstone, and the 'improvers' under the Biggses. Russell's policy suited Leicester's more moderate radicals who, supported by the 'Leicester Chronicle', began to call themselves the Whig-radical party in the town. Opposing these the left and centre radicals, united under the Biggses, and supported by the 'Leicestershire Mercury', regarded

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22. See also Ch.4, pp 74–75 and 82–85: it was a novel departure when many Congregationalist and Baptist leaders opposed this concession to Roman Catholicism (Machin, 1967).

local improvements as secondary matters and took a vigorous part in the developing campaign for manhood suffrage<sup>23</sup>. Thus, it appears inevitable that the parliamentary sphere of Leicester's politics should then have become the principal theatre of contest in the ensuing years, and it seems highly significant that John Biggs, undoubtedly the most influential local politician of the period<sup>24</sup>, decided after years of hesitation to embark on a parliamentary career in the town. Needless to say the developments in Leicester politics at parliamentary level were of paramount influence on the way the electors voted in the five parliamentary elections between 1847 and 1861. For this reason, considerable attention is given to those developments in the next chapter.

b. *Industry*

During this period the hosiery trade, based on the stocking frame, was unquestionably Leicester's staple industry. Patterson indicates that the concentration of the trade within the counties of the East Midlands stemmed from a charter of King Charles II which had effectively made the London framework knitting industry a 'closed corporation', wherein the officers of the company exercised strict control, levying heavy fees and fines. The outcome was to drive the bulk of the London industry into the Midlands. Broadly, Nottinghamshire specialised in cotton, Derbyshire in silk, and Leicestershire in worsted. But this specialisation was not absolute for much cotton hosiery was made in Leicester<sup>25</sup>.

Until the later part of the nineteenth century the hosiery trade was essentially based on the 'domestic' or 'putting out' system, in contrast to the system operating in other contemporary sections of the textile industry where a genuine factory system was the norm: i.e. the cotton mills of Lancashire and,

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23. Patterson, p342.

24. Victoria, p218.

25. Wells, p65.

in Leicester itself, where by 1829 worsted spinning was carried out by steam-driven machinery, as in Brewin and Whetstone's factory in Frog Island, although there were still numerous small local factories or 'shops' where hand spinning with jennies was carried out<sup>26</sup>.

Several factors coalesced to severely inhibit the development of a true factory mode of production in the hosiery trade until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There was the technical difficulty of applying steam power to the frames, coupled with the superabundant supply of cheap labour which gave the employers no incentive to devise or promote labour-saving inventions. Also the framework knitters (stockingers) were fearful that such technological development would reduce the need for their labour: being accustomed to generations of grinding poverty they showed no spirit of enterprise, preferring their relative independence and liberty to the alternative of the 'factory bell'<sup>27</sup>.

But, despite the pre-industrial nature of the hosiery trade, during the early and mid nineteenth century capitalist techniques were in being<sup>28</sup>. Although minor small-scale improvements had taken place, such as the introduction of a broad frame which could knit several stockings simultaneously, and William Dawson's 'wheels' which were applied to existing warp machines to improve the manufacture of fancy hosiery, the actual frames were essentially unchanged in construction for a century. These frames were increasingly rarely owned by the individual framework knitters. Sometimes they were owned by the master 'hosiers' (a term used since the late eighteenth century to describe merchant employers, as distinct from the operatives) and warehousmen, or by their makers (framesmiths). But the system was more complex than that, for the hiring of frames became a profitable business

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26. *Patterson, p166.*

27. *Wells, p146.*

28. *Ellis, p92.*

during the early nineteenth century and especially after 1820. Speculators in frames included the 'shopocrats': eg. butchers, bakers and publicans: who hired the frames either to the hosiers or to the 'undertakers' (middlemen) who played an increasing role in the system. The gap between masters and men widened from the early nineteenth century onwards and, as the domestic spirit left the domestic system, a new competitive get-rich-quick spirit took its place: thus it became apparent just how oppressive the system could be<sup>29</sup>.

By 1845 although some frames were still to be found in the workers' cottages they were increasingly located in 'frame-shops' of varying size, which were often (incorrectly) referred to as 'factories'. These frame-shops, notorious for crowding and ill-ventilation, were actually organised on the same principle as the cottage. One of the largest in Leicester was that of J. and W. Biggs, with about nine hundred and fifty frames divided among about ninety-five middlemen<sup>30</sup>.

The system of renting the frames to operatives, whether at home or in a frame-shop, was throughout the period a constant source of friction between the framework knitters and their employers. The system provided a further positive motive, peculiar to the hosiery trade, for clinging to the old putting-out system and resisting change. A notable part of the manufacturers' profits came from the rent charged for the hired frames, especially if they resorted to the abuse of 'spreading' work over as many frames as possible and demanding full frame-rent in each case, even though something less than a full week's work had been given out. Small masters and middlemen were thereby enabled to undersell the larger and more reputable firms. And, in turn, the readiness of small employers and frame-hirers to let women,

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29. *Patterson, p62.*

30. *Victoria, p306.*

children and newcomers from other trades to rent frames, for the sake of the rent, helped to perpetuate the over-crowding of the labour market. The hosiery industry in this respect seemed to have been caught in a vicious circle. The one-time hosier apprentice and, later, writer on his trade, Felkin, was well acquainted both with the wretched state of the Leicester stockingers in 1844 and with the high profits made from frame-renting. Whilst a new frame cost at least £20, during periods of slack trade a second-hand machine could be bought for a few shillings and then rented for two shillings per week when trade revived. A Leicester framesmith admitted making 9–10% annual profit after paying for repairs (the average being about 7%), and the amount fell heavily on the workpeople. But the frame-rent position overall was complicated. To charge frame-rent was an insurance (or a recompense) against an undertaker, or even an individual workman, using the frame in part to do work for another employer. John and William Biggs (1842) deducted 1/6d in the £ from wages for wear and tear of frames making hose: this being a lighter burden than the current rate, but was not over-popular as it had to be paid by many men whose frames were not hired from the Biggses but from independent frame-speculators – in which case they had to go on paying frame-rent as well. Even so the Biggses were regarded as about the best hosier masters in town as they always paid the best wages the trade would allow and never resorted to the practice of charging full frame rent for less than a full week's work, nor knowingly allowed any middlemen who took out work from them to do so. They were even praised by a local hosier-hating Chartist leader named Thomas Cooper<sup>31</sup>.

In addition to frame-rent, the stockingers had other grievances such as low wages, frequent unemployment and truck-payment. The latter, a practice of

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31. *Patterson, pp380–384.*

payment by goods rather than cash, was regulated by law in 1831 but this proved increasingly ineffectual until 1844 when a local anti-truck society was formed to enforce the law and oppose trucking, especially among small hosiers and middlemen. Between 1844 and 1846 nineteen out of twenty prosecutions were successful<sup>32</sup>.

In 1843 twenty five thousand stockingers in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire signed a petition to the House of Commons concerning their grievances, and requested the appointment of a commission to regulate their increasingly inadequate wages and to arbitrate in disputes between masters and men. But the prevailing laissez-faire mood of Parliament was unfavourable and the petition was rejected, thereby demonstrating that the stockingers could expect no help from Parliament. However, an investigatory commission was established under R. M. Muggeridge and his report was published in 1845. Muggeridge essentially took up the laissez-faire position that improvement was rather to be looked for from increased demands for hosiery than from any parliamentary legislation, and the report made gloomy reading. It presented a picture of an industry stuck in a rut – left in the backwash of industrial progress<sup>33</sup> – whose leading figures, however enterprising they might be in other respects, had no belief in the possibility of any radical change in its organisation. Muggeridge acknowledged the shortcomings of the 1831 Truck Act and concluded that the hosiery industry was depressed because of low earnings. Indeed all witnesses to the commission agreed that real wages had declined since 1815, although this was partly due to the ending of the French wars when military demand declined and English soldiers returned home to their frames. Stockingers' families were generally shabby in appearance, ill fed and ill housed. The

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32. *Victoria*, p303.

33. *Wells*, p128.

report explicitly demonstrated many examples of poverty among the Leicester stockingers and irregularity of employment, especially in the glove trade. The supply of stockingers invariably exceeded demand thereby diminishing the value of their labour, exacerbated by the extension of employment of women and children in the unskilled jobs of winding, seaming and stitching. Muggeridge also acknowledged the question of frame-renting, which was always high when the stockinger worked in a frame-shop due to extra charges for the machine standing in the shop, for winding, taking in, putting out, seaming, needles, lighting and heating. The report showed the middlemen in a bad light over frame-rent abuses, although middlemen and hosiers were inclined to defend the system on the grounds that frame-renting was a means of securing constant employment, as the employer, needing the frame-rent, would have to give the work out. On the whole the manufacturers were apparently self-satisfied with existing arrangements.

But the frame-rent issue continued to burn throughout the middle years of the nineteenth century. An abortive bill to abolish frame-rent in 1853 was attacked in the House of Commons by William Biggs (then M.P. for Newport, I.O.W.), although his brother John had by that time abolished the system in all branches of his firm's business. Not until 1874, when the growth of the hosiery factory system was already making it an anachronism, was frame-rent finally abolished by law. However a steady improvement in the fortunes of the hosiery industry brought a new prosperity from 1860 onwards, and by 1868 Leicester's 'lean stockinger' had disappeared<sup>34</sup>.

There were of course other industries in mid nineteenth century Leicester, some of which, like needlemaking and sinkermaking, produced equipment for

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34. *Victoria*, pp308-310. See also Ch. 4, p85 and p87.



the hosiery trade. Others formed part of the general textile industry, such as woolcombing, worsted spinning and dyeing. There was also some manufacture of lace, cotton thread, rope and twine, as well as several iron foundries and manufacture of agricultural and other machines.

One important spin-off from hosiery making was the manufacture of elastic web, which began in 1839 when Caleb Bedells opened his Southgate Street factory – to be followed soon after by a rival, J. Briggs. By 1861 twenty local firms were in production in what was apparently a true factory system from the start. Wages were high and profits easily made – aided by the popularity of the elastic-sided boot, which in turn stimulated the local boot and shoe industry. Patterson notes that wages in fact dropped after the initial boom, but nevertheless remained significantly higher than any other part of the hosiery industry<sup>35</sup>.

The aforementioned boot and shoe industry in Leicester was considerable by mid century and expanded thereafter; the total local workforce grew from 1,393 in 1851 to 11,000 by 1871. Although three wholesale shoemakers were in production by 1843, the footwear was often made individually to order, and there were no factories in the modern sense. Rather these were central shops which cut leather by hand and gave it out to domestic bootmakers, working at home, to make up by hand. In most cases the unit of production was the family plus apprentice(s). Even so in 1853 a strong step towards factory production was taken by T. and T. Crick who devised a system of riveting sole to upper by machine, and in 1858 Blake introduced a sole-sewing machine which sewed the insole (already attached to the upper) to the outer sole<sup>36</sup>.

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35. Patterson, pp380-1.

36. Ellis, p101.

Perhaps the significant thing about Leicester's industrial scene is that apart from some notable strikes by worsted spinners and woolcombers during the early 1830s, discontent appears to have been confined to the hosiery trade – a point worth remembering in analyses of electoral behaviour.

c. **Working Class Politics**

Professor Asa Briggs regards the first half of the nineteenth century as an important formative period for both middle-class and working-class consciousness. He cites as an example the contemporary use of the terms 'middle-classes' and 'working-classes', and occasionally 'middle-class' and 'working-class', as indicative of this development. Before this period language suggested a more varied graduation: i.e. 'ranks, orders and degrees' (for social groups) and 'interests' (for economic groups). The new mode of thinking, he claims, led to a tendency to stress the divergent interests of the middle and working classes encouraged by both industrialisation and the 1830s reforms.

Indeed the assessment seized upon at the time by many working-men was that, the 1832 Reform Act represented a betrayal by the middle-class 'shopocracy' of its working-class allies, the 1834 Poor Law was the consequence of the assumption of power by the middle-classes in 1832, and the Anti-Corn Law League was an attempt to procure cheaper food so that the working-classes could then live on lower wages. However, F. C. Mather indicates that these interpretations were based on much misconception – that the 1832 Reform Act was a Whig aristocrat attempt to balance the old and new forces. The 1834 Poor Law was the outcome of the wishes of the landed

interest to shed its old burden (which it had already been doing piecemeal well before 1834), rather than a manifestation of the aspirations of the middle-classes. In the case of the Anti-Corn Law League some of its leaders hoped to produce a raising of wages by a general extension of trade which was hoped would accompany repeal of the Corn Laws. Nevertheless, Mather admits that there is enough truth in the cruder interpretation of events to have made that version plausible and thus strengthen materially the antagonism of the workers towards the class immediately above them, although there was also a concomitant current of opinion which regarded the old aristocratic privileged class as the principal enemy, and the interests of the producers, employers and workman, as being in some sense united against them. This view was popularised by the Anti-Corn Law League itself and the middle-class reformers, including the socialist Robert Owen<sup>37</sup>.

However, in Leicester the early 1830s witnessed discord between manufacturers and employees. Though the evidence is fragmentary it is sufficient to show that local trade union activity was both larger than its share in the agitation for factory reforms, and attended by much more bitterness and unrest. Doherty's 'National Association for the Protection of Labour' (1830) absorbed the stockingers and other small local trade societies. Widespread revival of trade union activity occurred throughout the Midlands in 1833 in consequence to the disappointment felt by the Whig reforms. Workers were now flocking into the surviving or newly created regional and 'general' trade unions that were based on the separated societies which had previously existed. Cole and Postgate in their publication, 'The Common People', claim (probably with some exaggeration) that 'The theory of the class struggle now for the first time appeared overtly in British history as a dominant belief<sup>38</sup>'.

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37. Mather, pp17-18.

38. Cole and Postgate, p261.

Among masters and men a bitter, aggressive mood developed; strikes were met by prosecution under the master and servant laws 'for leaving work unfinished'; masters were determined to destroy the local trades union whilst the working men were spoiling for a fight. In Leicester (1833) Raby's worsted spinning factory struck in support of dismissed women workers. A 'trades union secret committee' sent Raby a threatening letter demanding that the women be reinstated. The strike then spread to the woolcombers and severe sentences were passed on several strikers. By December 1833 the local stockingers became involved in the struggle when the hosiers appeared to be following the example of the master spinners in attempting to reduce wages. In 1834 the Leicester union became affiliated to the 'Grand National Consolidated Trade Union', whilst turning to co-operative production to augment their slender funds. However, all hope of building the 'Grand National' into a really comprehensive organisation of the working-classes was over by 1834, and where trade-unionism survived it kept quiet and set to work to rebuild its organisation on less ambitious lines, reverting to its earlier shape of small local societies in particular trades. Again it seems clear that the swift demise of the 'Grand National' was due to strong opposition from the employers. Different sets of employers (eg. the builders of Derby, the clothiers of Leeds, the hosiers of Leicester) offered workers the choice between leaving their employment or signing a document renouncing the union. In Leicester even the operative cordwainers (boot and shoemakers) vehemently repudiated the charge of belonging to a trade union, claiming rather that their society had no connexion with any other.

Meanwhile the movement for factory reform had some bearing on Leicester. Actually there were few local factories at this time, and most of the agitation

centred in Lancashire and Yorkshire where power-driven machinery in cotton and woollen manufacture was predominant. Nevertheless the commissioners sent to investigate conditions of child labour in factories, when the Whig government established a royal commission instead of Lord Ashley's Ten Hours bill (1833), did visit Leicester and, in contrast with Yorkshire, were generally welcomed by the local working-classes. This seems to suggest that the Leicester workers were not entirely hostile towards the Whig reformers. In fact the Commissioners perceived that the worst local abuses were in the domestic system sector rather than in the factories<sup>39</sup>. The resulting government Act did effect some valuable improvements by limiting the hours of work for the young, but it did not go beyond what manufacturers, like the cotton spinner Whetstone, could regard with equanimity.

The period 1836–48 witnessed the phenomenon of Chartism as the principal activity in working-class politics. According to F. C. Mather support for Chartism was generally strong among two distinct categories. One category particularly active during the early Chartist period was the traditional skills sector: eg. printers, cordwainers, cabinetmakers, tailors and joiners: despite its relative affluence and improved living standards of the period. This traditional craft support thus owed less to transient economic pressure than to steady political conviction – an intellectual tradition stretching back at least to the London Corresponding Society of 1792. With time to read and study they were essentially labour aristocrats, with a mature political awareness well in advance of the mass of the working force. In fact radicalism among skilled artisans can be traced back to the fifteenth century Lollards who recruited a following from weavers, wheelwrights, smiths, carpenters, cordwainers and tailors. Mather's other category comprised stockings, handloom weavers

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39. *Patterson, pp276–288.*

and woolcombers – all unrevolutionised handicrafts, relics of an older order which were in a state of decay, with wages sinking to starvation level. Support for Chartism was remarkably slight in the smaller towns where the community remained closely-knit, thereby preventing the emergence of serious fissures of class. For example, in Glossop employers achieved remarkable success in maintaining contact with their workpeople through the churches and chapels, reading rooms, literary institutes and sporting clubs, which they and the local landowner helped to found. Likewise the new towns displayed relatively little support for Chartism where steam-powered factories were the norm. The evidence is not wholly consistent with the view that Chartism was a direct reaction against the industrial revolution. Rather it drew its main support from the outworkers – surplus labour casualties induced by the expanding population and changing markets<sup>40</sup>. Craig Calhoun is broadly in agreement with this, although he clearly associates the rise of a class ideology with the new industrial workers: i.e. Calhoun identifies Chartism with the older, 'populist' form of worker protest and criticises E. P. Thompson for not perceiving the subtle distinction. Whereas Thompson saw a 'working-class' emerging between 1790 and 1830 Calhoun stresses that this obscures the distinction between those for whom a conservative, traditionalist ideology could be the source of radicalism, and those for whom a forward-looking, even anti-capitalist, ideology was more often than not the source of reformism<sup>41</sup>.

Leicester thus, with its large pre-industrial labour force, provided fertile ground for Chartism, and the remnants of the early 1830s trade unionism and ten hours movement combined in the late 1830s to make Chartism a movement powerful enough to threaten revolution and to command the backing of the

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40. Mather, p10.

41. Calhoun, p104.

main body of the working-classes. Undoubtedly periodic depressions within the hosiery trade and consequential threat of workhouse incarceration was an influential factor. Patterson notes that there was an inherent weakness in the principle of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act when applied to industrial areas because during depressions the inevitable outcome was destitution among groups such as the stockingers, where severe unemployment precluded the likelihood of (unsupplemented) wages rising in compensation, if indeed they were fortunate enough to have any work at all. This situation contrasted with the position of the agricultural labourers, especially in Southern England, whose wages had been kept deliberately low under the old Speenhamland system, and generally did rise after the 1834 provisions had been put into effect. It seems significant that Chartism blossomed in Leicester during 1838 when working-men were particularly hard-pressed by poverty and bitterly resentful of what they considered to be their employers' refusal to co-operate or help them. During the winter of 1838 a local petition bearing six thousand signatures was presented to Parliament, claiming that the abolition of outdoor relief would reduce wages still further, and this move led to the abandonment of the local workhouse policy despite the contemporary opening of a new and larger workhouse. However local opposition to the Poor Law was not as serious as in the north of England. This may have been partly due to the Conservative domination of the local board of guardians, who, partly through an intrinsic conservative distrust of radical measures of centralisation, uniformity and rigidity, and partly through a genuine sympathy for the poor, were inclined to resist enforcing the provisions of the 1834 Act<sup>42</sup>.

Actually 'Chartism' was a collective term. The movement came into existence in 1836 when Place and Lovett formed the 'London Working Men's

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42. Patterson, pp275-295.

Association' and drew up five points of what subsequently became the famous six-point charter. But by 1839, the year of its first high-water mark, it was apparent that much division existed among its leadership concerning tactics. Although various tactics were mooted<sup>43</sup>, for simplicity these can be reduced to the two approaches of 'moral force' and 'physical force'. Until 1842 the advocates of moral force prevailed strongly in Leicester, and this mirrored the Luddism of earlier years: i.e. violent approaches were in both cases confined to the northern part of the county. As in Wales Leicester's moral force approach may well have been partly influenced by an exceptional link between local Chartism and religious nonconformity, which helped to mitigate the antagonism between the classes. The formidable Baptist minister, Rev. Mursell, certainly expressed his sympathies although he gave no active support for Chartism<sup>44</sup>. However, perhaps care should be taken before assuming from this that nonconformity held much sway among the lower classes during the mid-nineteenth century. The 1851 religious census indicated that the labouring classes were in general neither church nor chapel attenders. M. Halevy deemed puritan nonconformity a transitional creed for a man climbing from the irreligious lower end of the socio-economic ladder (i.e. unskilled labour/skilled workman), through the nonconformist small or modest businessman sector, to the Anglican higher reaches of society. The very institutions of nonconformity seemed to be designed for the man moving up the ladder, and success or failure in the worldly sphere looked very much the same inside chapel as outside it<sup>45</sup>.

Chartism itself was divided in the assessment of the contemporary power structure: i.e. who its principal opponents were: and this question of authority has been a source of controversy among twentieth century historians. For

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43. *Hammond, pp268-270.*

44. *Victoria, p210.*

45. *Hammond, pp217-249.*



example, during the First World War decade Mark Hovell assumed the middle-classes won power in 1832. More recently Dr. Kitson Clark believed the nobility and gentry still exerted ultimate control in the decades after 1832. Thus the middle-class reformers, not so sure of themselves as was believed earlier, courted support from the working-classes – some by advocating further parliamentary reforms along Chartist lines<sup>46</sup>. Often the Chartists themselves saw the importance of allying with the manufacturing middle-classes. For example their prominent leader Feargus O'Connor declared in 1841:

... 'it was in the working man's interest to uphold capital' for 'they could not all be capitalists ...'<sup>47</sup>:

while William Lovett saw the pragmatic necessity of working with the middle-class reformers, since allies in Parliament were needed to present Chartist bills. By the time of the final high-water mark of the movement's fortunes (1848) O'Connor was appearing on platforms with middle-class radicals, emphasising (like John Bright) the unity of middle and working classes against the aristocracy – a union O'Connor himself called:

... 'mental labour on the one hand and manual labour on the other' ...<sup>48</sup>

One notable middle-class radical who shared a platform with O'Connor in 1848 was Sir Joshua Walmesley, who became a Leicester M.P. in 1852.

Other Chartists rejected co-operation with the middle-classes, seeing them as the principal enemy. Certainly the eventual Chartist leader, Ernest Jones, pleaded for workers to purge the movement of middle-class leaders, whom,

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46. *Kitson Clark, p7.*

47. *Mather, p5.*

48. *Ibid, p20*

he claimed, were trying to play into the hands of class-selfishness. The middle class called meetings and misused the people's name, and therefore the first thing was to prevent the old dodge from being played once more<sup>49</sup>. And, as McCord points out, some Chartists lost no time in expressing their hostility to the anti-Corn Law agitation, which they condemned as a middle-class trick designed to drag a red herring before the workers to distract them from their real grievances and the fight for the political rights embodied in the People's Charter<sup>50</sup>. In Britain as a whole this seems to have particularly been the case between 1840 and 1842 when a severe trade depression, coinciding with very high food prices, raised social tensions of all kinds, according to F. C. Mather, to a pitch not perhaps to be reached again until after 1880. Middle-class magistrates and special constables frequently suppressed Chartist demonstrations during this period. In Leicester the rise to prominence of Thomas Cooper in the movement in 1842 brought local Chartism into conflict with the manufacturing classes<sup>51</sup>. Two years earlier Cooper had made his first close contact with the abysmal poverty of the Leicester stockingers and was, apparently, shocked by it into becoming a Chartist. He denounced the hosiers and other employers as responsible, through their greed and selfishness, for the distress of the working-classes. In turn he was as stoutly resisted by the Liberal manufacturers as by anyone else in the propertied classes. Cooper also deemed Corn Law repeal and laissez-faire doctrines as beneficial only to the Liberal manufacturers, and the Anti-Corn Law League itself (locally founded under the influence of the radical hosier, John Biggs, in 1838) as a deliberate manoeuvre to divert attention from the Charter. On August 19th 1842 there was a local abortive skirmish between fifteen hundred Chartist demonstrators and the yeomanry, known as the 'battle of Mowmacre Hill'. However, the emergence of this 'physical-force' mood

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49. Calhoun, p6.

50. McCord (1968), p45.

51. Victoria, p212.

perhaps owed more to the personality of Cooper than to local conditions of distress, for, though in January 1842 five thousand were receiving outdoor relief, similar distress occurred in the 1839–40 winter without disturbances or increase in Chartist activity, then at low ebb. Cooper himself was imprisoned for sedition in the Potteries soon after<sup>52</sup>.

Although more serious riots occurred in 1848, progressively through the 1840s a reconciliation between the middle and working classes began to emerge both in Leicester and elsewhere. This was undoubtedly assisted by the improvement in the economic situation after 1842, while the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 removed an important bone of contention, enabling the relations between classes to become smoother. The more moderate Chartists succeeded in spurring a portion of the middle-classes into taking up franchise reform as a means of winning working-class support in their battle against Toryism and aristocratic privilege.

From 1846 onwards the Leicester Chartist leadership was recruited predominantly from among the working men, and the movement began to nourish the idea of labour as a separate entity. However, Mather claims that although this trend suggests at least a limited existence of working-class consciousness, in Chartist times a single working-class, clearly differentiated from the middle-class, did not fully exist. Rather it was under a substantially different set of conditioning circumstances, economic and political, that a working-force sufficiently united to launch its own political party came into being between the 1880s and 1919<sup>53</sup>.

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52. *Patterson, pp304–315; Ellis pp99–101.*

53. *Mather, pp25–30.*

The last Chartist revival during 1848 was concurrent with Poor Law riots in Leicester, which arose when the unemployed were being put to work in the stone-yards. But although there was no evidence to indicate explicit Chartist involvement in the disturbances Chartism seemed to some blameworthy, particularly among the propertied classes where a renewed fear of insurrection was spreading. The riots even shook the precarious rapprochement between the local Chartists and the Liberal reformers, although differences of opinion were already apparent: i.e. on the issue of the franchise the moderate Whetstone advocated household suffrage, the Biggses manhood suffrage, while local Chartist leader, John Markham, wanted the whole six-point charter.

Chartism declined rapidly everywhere towards the end of 1848. Patterson indicates that the key to its decline was that it had been essentially a hunger movement, born of hard times. When, after the 1840s, times began to be a little less hard it came to an end. As a Chartist leader George Wray exclaimed:

... 'There are hundreds of young men in Leicester who pretend to be Chartists and have been good members of the Association – when they were half-starved – but as soon as they got employment they forgot their political duties' ...<sup>54</sup>

It was certainly true that by 1850 England, and especially Leicester, having passed from the 'hungry forties' was beginning to enjoy progressively better times on the whole, and by the turn of the twentieth century the town was numbered among the richest in Europe.

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54. *Patterson, p363.*

After 1848 the former Chartist activists moved in three different directions. A few locals, like Green, joined the avowedly socialist remnant of the movement led by Ernest Jones, but never achieved popular support. Others moved into the revitalised trade unions and co-operative movement. But especially significant in its implication for electoral behaviour of the 1850s and early 1860s was the absorption of the more moderate wing of the movement into the radical wing of the local Liberal party. John Markham, a cordwainer and erstwhile Primitive Methodist preacher, was a notable example, becoming a Liberal town councillor<sup>55</sup>. The Liberal left, under John Biggs's leadership, was to fight a succession of parliamentary elections advocating a programme which fell only just short of the six-point charter itself – a point their less-radical opponents within the local parties, anxious to appeal to anti-Chartist sentiment, were often quick to draw attention to in their respective newspapers.

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55. *Ibid*, p363.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Leicester 1832-67: - Parliamentary Politics*

The nationwide excitement which accompanied the debate over the parliamentary Reform bill (1831-2) was mirrored in Leicester, although there were no incidences of riot such as occurred in Derby, Nottingham and Bristol when the House of Lords rejected the bill in 1831. Rather Leicester took the lead of Birmingham, which had formed a 'Political Union' of middle-class and working-class radicals (1830) and was urging other towns to form similar associations in order to make the wishes of the country overwhelmingly evident. The Leicester 'Political Union' was formed in 1832.

Under the provisions of the 1832 Reform Act a considerable number of working-men retained the vote through their 'ancient right' freemen status, even though the new franchise only included freemen entitled by birth and servitude and residing within seven miles of the borough. The outcome being that the 2,500 non-resident freemen listed in 1826 were reduced to 500 after 1832. Thenceforth the local electorate grew slowly, but by 1852 it was still well below the pre-reform figure. Many of the freemen and 'scot & lot' voters retaining the franchise were below the social and economic level of the £10 householders, and were accustomed to regard electoral bribes as their inalienable privilege<sup>1</sup>.

The new franchise favoured the cause of the opposition Liberal group. Despite the formation of a Conservative society supported by the 'Leicester Journal', the Liberals were better equipped, having their rallying points in the chapels, better techniques in registration and their own 'Liberal Reform Society'. Thus, the general election of December 1832 produced a victory for the reformers, Wynn Ellis and William Evans becoming the town's M.P.s<sup>2</sup>.

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1. *Patterson, pp187-193.*

2. *Victoria, p147.*

As in the sphere of municipal politics after the Municipal and Corporations Act (1835), so in the local parliamentary sphere after 1832 the reformers were predominant for thirty-five years, although their predominance was briefly broken twice before the second Reform Act of 1867. But the general pattern among the local Liberals showed a theme of conflict beneath the surface of an apparently smooth and cosy triumph: i.e. conflicts between the reformers themselves. These conflicts were subdued in the face of a common enemy, but sharpened in response to social distress and religious discontent. In fact the period between the first and second Reform Acts (1832–67) witnessed a complete cycle of revolution in Leicester's Liberal parliamentary politics. It began in unity, dissolved into discord and then outright war, but ultimately recoiled into a lasting concord. The elections between 1847 and 1861 were fought during the middle stage of the cycle.

The first break in the Liberals' parliamentary hold on the town occurred in the general election of January 1835, following the dismissal of Lord Melbourne's Whig ministry by King William IV. Although the Whigs triumphed nationally against the new-look, moderate Conservatism promulgated in Peel's 'Tamworth Manifesto', two Conservatives, Goulburn and Thomas Gladstone (brother to W. E. Gladstone), were returned for Leicester. It seems that the result was a manifestation of a loss of radical impetus, due to their disillusionment with the Whigs over the 1834 Poor Law and anger over the Tolpuddle martyrs, whilst a concomitant Conservative revival occurred, doubtlessly helped by Peel's moderation, and roused by the call to defend the Church against the local Church-rates campaign and the ecclesiastical policy of the Whig government<sup>3</sup>.

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3. *Ibid*, pp202–3.

But an important effect of the 1835 Municipal and Corporations Act was to deprive the local Conservatives of their most effective political organization (i.e. the old corporation), whilst the Liberals benefited in prestige by their control of the new council, and the annual council elections kept their electoral machinery in constant motion. The ascendancy of the Liberal reformers was founded upon the control they succeeded in establishing over the wards and parishes, and they were inspired by the crusading vigour of dissent. For the general election of 1837, fully recovered from the 1835 setback, they selected Samuel Duckworth and John Easthope to contest the two parliamentary seats, having dropped the moderate Evans, and successfully campaigned with a vigorous, radical programme comprising a national educational system, household suffrage, the ballot, triennial parliaments, abolition of compulsory Church-rates, 'Justice for Ireland', reform of the new Poor Law and repeal of the Corn Laws<sup>4</sup>.

The defeated Conservatives, though levelling accusations of bribery and corruption against the Liberals, had several disadvantages. The record of the old corporation still clung to them, while their connection with the Established Church put them on the defensive in a town where nonconformity was gaining strength. After the 1837 election they were in a dispirited, hopeless position. Their membership, comprising gentry, professional men and some shopkeepers, could not compete financially with the moneyed power of the Liberals. In contrast the latter were well organised. The 'Liberal Reform Society' controlled the funds, selected candidates and maintained a paid agent who kept in touch with the electors. A committee of eighteen was elected annually by a general meeting of subscribers, and similar organisations were established in the wards, controlled by secretaries and elected committees of their own. The candidates were not imposed on the party by central committee but submitted to the approval of delegates elected by the wards and to a general meeting

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4. *Patterson, pp232-3.*



of the Liberal electors. In 1856 the local Liberals boasted that their machinery for working the wards in connexion with the Liberal interest was complete and efficient to the extent that they were, in the 1852 general election campaign, able in one day to compute the force they should have. The 'Caucus' principle was thus developed in Leicester long before it was perfected in Birmingham<sup>5</sup>.

Even so a lapse in their efforts in ward control in 1838 brought alarm when Duckworth resigned of necessity on his appointment to a Mastership of the Rolls, and the possibility of a Conservative-Chartist alliance arose based on a mutual condemnation of the 1834 Poor Law. However, the Chartist hopefuls, John Markham and Colonel P. Thompson, both eventually declined to stand, and the Liberals decided to bring back Wynn Ellis who succeeded in attracting the Chartist vote and totalled 1,666 votes against the inexperienced Conservative landowner, Frewin, who obtained 1,371. Thus for a time the Liberals felt secure from the Chartist threat<sup>6</sup>.

But in the 1841 general election the Chartists, now under Thomas Cooper, who was more hostile towards employers and thus less willing to compromise with the middle-class Liberals, supported the Conservatives. They were however defeated by the Liberals without recourse to a poll; Wynn Ellis and John Easthope being elected unopposed on a policy of Corn Law repeal, Church rates abolition and reform of the Whig Poor Law<sup>7</sup>.

Although throughout the 1840s the Leicester Liberals remained clearly more radical than the Whig leadership strains developed, especially around the issues of religious equality, suffrage extension and Chartism. All these markedly exposed the different degrees of radicalism and strained the unity of the party. In the case of the Church rates issue some advocated openly defying the law, others advocated obeying the

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5. *Victoria*, pp204-6.

6. *Patterson*, pp297-308.

7. *Victoria*, p206

law until the Whigs changed it. This difference of opinion coincided with differences of religious denomination: i.e. the Unitarians stood for moderation, but the Congregationalists and Baptists stood for direct action and helped to found the 'British anti-state Church Association (Liberation Society)' in 1844. As in the seventeenth century, religious radicalism led readily to political radicalism. Clerical privilege was seen as hand in hand with aristocratic privilege. The growing bitterness between the radical 'Leicestershire Mercury' and the more moderate 'Leicester Chronicle' reflected the strain within the local Liberal party. But it must be stressed that local radical pressure originated not only in dissent but also in response to Chartism<sup>8</sup> (originating from among the more intelligent artisans), as indicated by the founding, in 1842, of a local branch of the 'Complete Suffrage Association' to revive the union of middle-classes and working-classes that had been achieved during the earlier struggle for reform. Thus the radical wing began to demand 'universal suffrage' whilst the moderates wanted only 'household suffrage'. The rift within the Leicester Liberal party was contained so long as the two factions shared common ground in their opposition to the Corn Laws. When in 1846 the Corn Laws were repealed the split became consequently more obvious. The 'moderates' led by Joseph Whetstone, increasingly fearful of the direction and extent to which radicalism was moving, became closer to Lord John Russell's Whig ministry, which was attempting to divert attention away from parliamentary reform by turning to relatively uncontroversial, consensus politics such as sanitary reform, prison discipline and education. The 'extremists' or 'ultra-radicals', supported by the 'Mercury' newspaper, took a vigorous part in the developing campaign for universal (manhood) suffrage and concessions to nonconformity, including Church disestablishment, although the faction was not entirely composed of dissenters. They were reinforced by the personage of John Biggs, the local wealthy hosiery manufacturer, who had earlier been a balancing figure between the two wings, but had become increasingly

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8. See Chapter 3, pp58-66.

associated with the left after the Corn Law repeal. Patterson notes that personal factors also contributed towards the growing schism and new political alignment which was taking place in Leicester. The older leaders, families prominent in the trade and politics (insofar as they were allowed, as dissenters) of the town since the late eighteenth century, resented the passing of their leadership to thrusting, self-made fellows such as the Biggs brothers.

Meanwhile the local Conservative opposition was developing a moderate or Peelite flank. The radicals, by winning back the working-men as they became disillusioned by the initial failure of Chartism, brought the possibility of a Whig-Peelite alliance. Thus the national political scene of the period, with its blurring of former party lines, was partly reflected in Leicester, but with one sharp and all-important difference – the numbers and predominance of the radicals.

The 1847 general election forced the issue between the local Whigs (or rather the 'moderates') and radicals. The contemporary distress within the hosiery trade gave impetus to the radicals, who were not satisfied with the sitting members, Easthope and Wynn Ellis, whom had quarrelled with the Biggses and other radical chiefs over the extent of their 1841 election expenses. Also Ellis was considered too fully associated with Lord Russell's cautious Whig ministry, whilst Easthope had offended nonconformity by refusing to vote against Graham's Education bill (1843), which was thought to bestow dangerous privileges on the Established Church. However, the left was not yet quite united, because although the Biggses, Richard Harris and other erstwhile centrists had now adopted manhood suffrage and disestablishment, the extreme nonconformist left (eg. the Rev. Mursell) were suspicious of their pro-education sympathies<sup>9</sup>.

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9. *Patterson, pp333–343.*

The Liberals eventually chose as one candidate Sir Joshua Walmesley, a prominent Liverpool corn merchant, whose local association dated back to 1831 by a partnership with John Ellis in the Leicestershire local mines at Snibston and Whitwick. He was part-proprietor of the 'Daily News' (founded in 1846 as organ of the 'New Reform Movement') and an outspoken radical who favoured disestablishment even though he was an Anglican<sup>10</sup>. A few days prior to the 1847 election the 'Leicestershire Mercury' quoted Walmesley:

'... From conviction a member of the Church of England I am satisfied that the best service which can be rendered to that Church, and to the cause of true religion, is the removal of every ground for just complaint on the part of the dissenter. ...'<sup>11</sup>

Walmesley's remark was of course tantamount to a direct call for disestablishment, since the leaders of the 'new dissent' (eg. Mursell and E. T. Miall) had long demanded it as a basis for removing dissenting grievances.

The 'Leicester Chronicle', as mouthpiece of the moderate Liberals, criticized the selection of Walmesley in a manner which, in a roundabout way, seems to demonstrate Patterson's claim of antipathy among the older Liberals towards the new 'self-made fellows':

'... Why, we must go to Liverpool; bring thence a man of whom we know nothing, save but by report, and hug him to our hearts as a sworn brother. We do not want an aristocratic man, or a man who has made a public situation the means of obtaining honour. Therefore we are to choose Sir Joshua Walmesley, of Liverpool, who when mayor of that town a few years since, was dubbed a Knight by her majesty. We (say them by implication) do not want men who have been the 'architects of their own fortunes': therefore a gentleman who has been a successful speculator in corn and railroad shares, and is now a man of wealth, will suit us! - Out upon the emptiness and worthlessness of the pleas that disappointed ambition puts forth to do its mischievous work! ...'<sup>12</sup> (original emphasis)

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10. *Victoria*, pp214-215.

11. *L.M.* 24-7-1847.

12. *L.C.* 20-2-1847.

Walmesley's partner in the 1847 contest for the two-seat borough was another radical, Manchester mill-owner Richard Gardner. He too opposed the continued establishment of the Church of England and the endowment of any religious body by the state<sup>13</sup>.

The Conservatives put up a reformist Peelite, J. W. Parker. He tried to win over the Whig/moderate support by denouncing Walmesley and Gardner as dangerous ultra-radicals. He said that he would 'protect the Church', show sincere respect for nonconformity and uphold the cause of 'protestant truth' against Romanism<sup>14</sup>.

This clear anti-Romanist stance of Parker appears to mirror the prevailing religious outlook in late 1840s Leicester, assuming the local press was a reliable reflection of opinion. Although the radical 'Mercury' gave it little attention, the moderate-Liberal 'Chronicle' seems to have directed its religious attack principally against the Romanists, and was at one with the local Conservative organ, the 'Leicester Journal'. The latter, though it condemned 'bigotry, persecution and intolerance' towards the Romanist population of Britain and Ireland, it vigorously denounced the RC priesthood as the 'wily and revered apostles of Satan'<sup>15</sup>. It is true that the 'Chronicle' had an occasional swipe at the Established Church, like in its criticism of Lord Russell's support for the Bishopric of Manchester bill:

'... The country requires no more Bishops: their absence from the House of Lords would scarcely cause a tear to be shed in the Nation ...'<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless the 'Chronicle' made no direct calls for disestablishment and praised Lord Russell's anti-religious-discrimination outlook. Thus whereas 'church versus dissent' had been the dominant theme in the municipal politics of Leicester during the 1830s and early 1840s, on the whole it appears that, insofar as religion was under

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13. L.M. 4-7-1847.  
16. L.C. 24-7-1847.

14. *Victoria*, p216.

15. L.J. 25-6-1847.

scrutiny in 1847, it was more a case of 'Protestantism versus Romanism'. The 1845 government grant to the R.C. seminary at Maynooth seems chiefly responsible for this development, and it appears significant that in his election address Gardner deemed it expedient to make an explicit reference to Romanism within his overall disestablishment standpoint:

'... I am of course opposed, on principle, to the endowment by the state of the Roman Catholics, or any other religious body ...'<sup>17</sup>

These attitudes reflect the point made by G. I. T. Machin that the Maynooth Grant, an important part of Peel's Irish policy, caused nationwide opposition and a split in the Conservative party (eg. Parker was a Peelite but spoke against the grant)<sup>18</sup>.

The fourth prospective candidate in the 1847 election was George Buckby, the Chartist, who plunged into a campaign in which frame-rent was a burning issue, and the stockingers were consequently alienated from the hosiers, including John Biggs himself<sup>19</sup>. So, as in 1841, there arose the possibility of a Conservative-Chartist alliance. The 'Journal' expressed regret at the termination of parliamentary discussion on Halford's bill (which proposed control and ultimate abolition of the system of frame-rent) and attacked the sitting M. P., Wynn Ellis, for seemingly blaming the stockingers' lack of education, rather than the system, for their plight: i.e. their habits and the practice of putting their offspring to the trade. The 'Journal' stressed:

'... You must first put the people into a condition to receive education and to exercise self-control; as otherwise all the discussions in Parliament on the advantages of education will be as useless as putting food before an inanimate body, or applying medicine to a corpse. ... Towards this end, we believe, the abolition of the Frame-rent and middleman system will tend: hence we pray its abolition, that a better superstructure may be raised upon the present unstable foundations. ...'<sup>20</sup>

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17. L.J. 23-7-1847.  
20. L.J. 14-5-1847.

18. Machin (1967), pp61-67. 19. Patterson, p345.

The 'Journal' maintained its attack on Wynn Ellis as the election approached, accusing him again of favouring the middlemen and the archaic system which was particularly open to abuses, and made a repeat call for the abolition of the frame-rent and middleman system by Law<sup>21</sup>.

It was of course both easy and convenient for the Conservatives, neither dependent on nor representative of the manufacturing interest, to side with the working-men during industrial discord. Nevertheless this stance mirrored earlier nationwide developments since 1832, such as Conservative support for the 'ten hours movement' and their sympathy towards the working-men in the face of the Whig Poor Law of 1834 (although the Leicester reformists too sought consistently to ameliorate effects of the Poor Law during the late 1830s and 1840s). But it was less easy for the Liberals, and the 'Mercury' demonstrated the limits of its radicalism when confronted with the frame-rent question. Sir Henry Halford M.P. wished to compel the hosier masters to issue tickets to the stockings for work done and for frame-rent:<sup>22</sup> The 'Mercury', however, was cool towards the proposal:

'... But we feel that to restrict these charges to a parliamentary standard – to prevent them from being matters of bargain and contract – to enact that they shall never exceed a given proportion of the gross earnings when the workman may have lost half his time in idleness or pleasure – or to deprive the owner of a frame of the first week's rent – is an arbitrary and despotic interference with the rights of property and the freedom of trade ...'<sup>23</sup>

The attitude of the moderate 'Chronicle' was similar and played upon the stockings' perennial fear at the prospect of being forced into a fully-fledged factory system:

'... We feel certain that the inevitable consequence of the abolition of frame-rent by law would be the almost immediate removal of the machines from the houses of the workmen, and the partial placing of them in factories' ...<sup>24</sup>

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21. *Ibid* 21-5-1847.  
24. *L.C.* 27-3-1847.

22. *Patterson*, p386.

23. *L.M.* 23-1-1847.

As it turned out no Conservative–Chartist alliance emerged. Buckby withdrew from the contest and advised his supporters to vote for Walmesley and Gardner. It appears that Walmesley himself played the leading role in this development, for he promised to help the stockingers 'in any way he could' (This was a sincere undertaking; Walmesley subsequently supported the abortive 1853 parliamentary attempt to abolish frame–rent, and thus became the stockingers' champion).

Walmesley and Gardner won the 1847 election (see Appendix 1A), but the Liberal majority was down on the 'show of hands' victory of 1841. Patterson claims that this was the outcome of considerable abstentions among sympathisers of the spurned sitting members, whom he describes as 'Whigs'<sup>25</sup>. However, the 'Chronicle' did not view the moderate section of the local Liberal party in this light, although the newspaper itself did share the contemporary Whig stress on the priority of sanitary reform and education. Rather it saw the real 'Whigs' as epitomised in the personage of Lord Russell: i.e. liberally–inclined but more liberal out of office than when in, and possibly even retreating from earlier liberal ground. It deemed the bulk of the contemporary Liberal party to be comprised 'progressives' ('as WE belong to') and 'ultras'<sup>26</sup>. The 'Chronicle's' political stance during the 1847 contest was perhaps appropriately summed up in its editorial of May 29th 1847:

'... Our only desire is ... to witness the election of two sound progressive reformers for Leicester – two men who will represent the majority of the Liberal party ably and faithfully. But we feel certain the party will not generally support men who hold opinions of an extreme or ultra character'<sup>27</sup>

And, after the result was declared:

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25. Patterson, pp345–7.

26. L.C. 15–5–1847.

27. Ibid, 29–5–1847.



' ... The Leicester election is over, and two ultra-reformers are returned as our representatives ... Leicester has returned two complete suffragists and anti-state-Church men; while the bulk of the constituency are really neither the one nor the other.'<sup>28</sup>

The 'Chronicle' suggested that though the friends of Wynn Ellis had remained neutral, the success of Walmesley and Gardner was primarily due to a prevailing anti-Tory disposition among the electorate.<sup>29</sup>

But on a more ominous note the Conservative 'Journal' remarked:

' ... We have the names of parties who received money to vote green instead of blue, and we know personally others who were told that if they chose to vote for the green party they could be told where they might make sure of a sovereign. These are the acts which have carried the return, and these are the acts of the party who claim the extensions of the suffrage and the Ballot ... '<sup>30</sup>

The 'Journal' was on the mark for, as elsewhere in the 1847 general election, bribery was rife in Leicester, and a petition led to the disqualification of Walmesley and Gardner. Two of their supporters, John Ellis and Richard Harris, decided to stand in their place to 'keep the seats warm for the dispossessed members', and no poll was found to be necessary. In November 1847 John Biggs received the consolation of being elected mayor of the borough for a second term, during which he led the 'expenders' on a discordant stage against the 'economists', and adopted the cause of national secular education<sup>31</sup>.

Five years later, in 1852, when, during the brief minority government of Lord Derby, the nation prepared for another general election, the Leicester Liberals again invited Walmesley and Gardner to stand. This action provoked an even more serious response from the moderate section of the party than had been the case in 1847. It seems that during the intervening period the minority moderates became more

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28. *Ibid* 31-7-1847.  
31. Patterson, pp341-8.  
Victoria, pp217-8.

29. *Ibid.*

30. L.J. 30-7-1847.

cautious towards reformist ideas, and two developments influenced their outlook. One was the local Poor Law riots of 1848 which, occurring at the time of the final Chartist crisis, were (probably wrongly) laid at the door of the Chartist campaigners. The other was Louis Napoleon's 1851 coup d'etat and plebiscite which sanctioned his dictatorship of France. These developments warned them afresh of the dangers in political experiment and universal suffrage<sup>32</sup>.

But the ultra-radicals were unabashed and campaigned on a programme possibly even more radical than in 1847. The election addresses of Walmesley and Gardner pledged a programme including the suffrage for all tax-payers, the ballot, triennial parliaments, and abolition of the property qualification for M.P.s. This clearly had much in common with the Chartists' 'six points' – a feature which the moderates readily fastened upon. A veteran moderate, T. T. Paget, summed up his colleagues' attitude in a speech which was published in the 'Mercury' and entitled 'To the Chartists (sic)':

'... Universal suffrage has not prevented a neighbouring country from falling under the most cruel and degrading tyranny the world has ever seen. The first object of the French Dictator has been to destroy that bulwark against oppression, which the Middle-classes in every country afforded by their superior advantages of education and property, to their humbler brethren ...'<sup>33</sup>

The 1852 opposition to the dominant radical section of the Leicester Liberal party indeed went a stage further than 1847. Several well-known and influential characters, including Paget himself and Robert Brewin (both acknowledged as numbering among the 'founding fathers' of the local Liberal party), J. Whetstone and James Thompson (editor of the 'Chronicle'), rallied and produced two rival candidates, James Wilde and Geoffrey Palmer. As the 'Chronicle' reported:

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32. *Patterson, pp359–361.*

33. *L.M. 29–5–1852.*

'... He (Mr. Whetstone) evidently felt it to be a painful but necessary duty to show that he objected on principle to support candidates whose views approached so closely to the Chartist doctrines as to be scarcely distinguishable from them ...'

And, as the 'Chronicle' itself commented:

'... We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that the more active and organised section of the hitherto Liberal party has gone over to Chartism ...'<sup>34</sup>

The newspaper also pointed out that one of the former local Chartist leaders, John Markham, now numbered among the ultra-radical Liberals<sup>35</sup>.

With the wholehearted support of the 'Chronicle' the moderates staunchly opposed the idea of universal suffrage. The radicals wanted to give the vote to both householders and lodgers, but the moderates saw the plan as a trick designed to disguise what was, in reality, almost tantamount to Chartism's 'universal suffrage', and to make it instead appear only as a slight modification of 'household suffrage'. The moderates were prepared to accept only 'household suffrage' because, as they saw it, only the householders had stood the test of character – otherwise they would not have remained householders for long<sup>36</sup>. Candidate James Wilde himself said that he did not want to see the idle, worthless and dissolute put on a level with the honest and laborious, otherwise every institution held valuable and dear would be in jeopardy: it was therefore the electors' duty to discriminate between Liberalism and the Chartism of Walmesley and Gardner<sup>37</sup>. Wilde's partner, Geoffrey Palmer, likewise opposed 'pernicious Chartist doctrines' and dubbed Walmesley and Gardner 'the lions rampant of Chartism'<sup>38</sup>, whilst the 'Chronicle' seldom lost an opportunity to remind its readership of the leanings of the radical section of the party:

'... although the leader of the Chartist party, Mr. John Biggs, had lately ...'<sup>39</sup>

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34. L.C. 20-3-1852.  
37. *Ibid*, 29-5-1852.

35. *Ibid*, 5-6-1852. See Also Ch. 3, p66  
38. *Ibid*, 26-6-1852.

36. L.C. 3-4-1852.  
39. *Ibid*, 22-5-1852.

An almost inevitable development in the conflict was for the moderates to seek a rapprochement with the local Conservatives. As T. T. Paget wrote in an open letter to the Conservatives:

'... We differ from you in General Politics ... but we believe that you will aid us in vindicating our local independence from the fetters of a Chartist clique ...'<sup>40</sup>

The 'Journal' expressed doubt concerning the wisdom of not fighting Walmesley and Gardner with a Tory candidate, but said that it would accept its party's decision. A meeting of Conservative electors, held in early June 1852, opted to throw their weight behind Wilde and Palmer, and in so doing consciously drew a parallel with 1800, when the Whigs and Tories united to beat the Jacobins<sup>41</sup>.

Naturally enough the 'Mercury' defended the ultra-radicals:

'... The cause of the difference is no angry collision of sentiments, no widely-removed principles, no irreconcilable distinctions in social or political creed. The ambition of a selfish minority is the only origin of the dissention ... . It has summoned as allies the leading members of that party whose principles it once affected to hold in abhorrence ... . It has been assiduously asserted that Sir Joshua Walmesley and Mr. Richard Gardner are the express nominees of Chartists and Communists, although the assembly which determined on their nomination was composed of Liberals of all shades and descriptions, among whom there was probably not a single avowed Communist, and of whom the great majority have never advocated or given in their adhesion to the People's Charter ...'<sup>42</sup>

And, as the contest progressed:

'... Leicester is not the only place in which a querulous Whig Minority ... has ended a systematic course of unworthy machinations by open alliance with reactionists and obstructives ...'<sup>43</sup>

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40. L.M. 29-5-1852.  
43. *Ibid*, 12-6-1852.

41. L.J. 4-6-1852.

42. L.M. 29-5-1852.

The relatively improved conditions within the hosiery trade by 1852 led to the decline in impetus of the Poor Law relief question. The radicals seemed disinclined to be drawn on the matter, but the moderate 'Chronicle' advocated a firm line. It stressed that although it desired humane treatment for the young, old and incapable, the able-bodied paupers should be strictly dealt with: they should not be encouraged to be kept by the ratepayers, most of whom were only a few degrees higher in the social scale than the paupers themselves.<sup>44</sup> As in 1847 the 'Chronicle' deemed education to be the appropriate vehicle for generating improved moral conduct and industrious habits: and, as a side-swipe to the radicals commented:

'... It is now the fashion to flatter only one class – the working class ...'<sup>45</sup>

On the religion front, the issue of disestablishment was again raised. As before Walmesley and Gardner advocated disestablishment<sup>46</sup>, whilst their opponents, like Parker in 1847, were loyal Anglicans<sup>47</sup> – a fact which was probably crucial in their alliance with the Conservatives. But on the whole it appears that, compared to the burning issue of the suffrage, the disestablishment question was a relative side-show. It was a different matter, however, with Romanism. As in 1847 the radicals tended to ignore this topic, but their opponents did their best to make an election issue of it, and the tone of their respective organs in 1852 was rather more frenzied than during the 1847 election campaign. The Conservative 'Journal' stressed that the forthcoming election was all about 'Queen versus Pope', and exclaimed:

'... We complain that Popery is persecuting, domineering and aggressive, we therefore pay it £30,000 a year to strengthen it for more assaults on our liberty ...'<sup>48</sup>

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44. L.C. 27-3-1852.  
47. Victoria, p219.

45. Ibid, 13-3-1852.  
48. L.J. 28-5-1852.

46. Ibid, 5-6-1852.

The 'Journal' was of course referring to the continuance of the 1845 Maynooth Grant. But it appears that the contemporary antipathy by the Conservatives hinged more upon the seeming pretentiousness of the Roman Church in establishing an English regular hierarchy in 1850. Wilde expressed his abhorrence of this move, but the 'Mercury' was quick to note the absence of 'Maynooth' from both his and Palmer's election addresses<sup>49</sup>. The 'Chronicle' was very hostile towards the continuance of the Maynooth Grant, declaring the Irish college to be a 'hotbed of treason, sedition and dissatisfaction' and that it 'ought to be suppressed'. It accused Walmesley and Gardner of being soft on Romanism, and that fifty Roman Catholic voters in Leicester had pledged them their support. Yet the 'Chronicle' conceded that many staunchly protestant nonformists were also pledged to support them, and it stressed that the question was whether the nonconformists would be true to themselves or be merely pledged to political expediency<sup>50</sup>.

In contrast with the 'Journal' the 'Chronicle' also made several sharp attacks on what it considered to be the growth of Romanism within the Established Church itself. The growth of 'tractarianism' since the advent of the 'Oxford Movement' in 1833 had, under the influence of learned men like Dr. Pusey, led certain individual Anglican parishes to re-introduce the ritualism of the pre-reformation period, and they consequently became labelled as sympathetic towards the teachings and practises of the Roman Church. This development had a local significance since a Vicar of St. Margaret's church, Rev. Anderdon, noted for his innovation of 'Popish ritual', had latterly, like John Henry Newman, defected to the Roman Church<sup>51</sup>. The 'Chronicle' exclaimed:

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49. L.M. 26-6-1852.

50. L.C. 19-6-1852.

51. Patterson, p371.

'... We do not know what our readers' opinions may be on this subject, but to us it appears evident the *virus* of Romanism is spreading in this community ... our late observations and experience convinces us that a 'Puseyite' is either rapidly moving on the high road to Rome, where he *must* arrive at last, quite unconsciously to himself – or he is a JESUIT IN DISGUISE ...'<sup>52</sup> (original emphasis)

The newspaper made a similar fuss over the Anglican 'Sisters of Mercy' at Devonport, and claimed that the Church awaited a second Reformation. It suggested that the 'Romanist traits' of the upper-classes were to blame for these developments within the Established Church<sup>53</sup>. The 'Chronicle's' outbursts on this matter produced no apparent response, and were thus of no obvious consequence in the 1852 election campaign. Nevertheless it does serve to demonstrate the intensity of feeling towards Romanism on the part of some influential persons in the borough. It also seems clear that no politician dared to openly express sympathy towards Romanism, and this suggests that anti-Romanism could well have been significant among the electorate.

In fact the growth of ritualistic practices within the Established Church were seen by many as offering encouragement to the Roman Pontiff in his decision to establish a regular hierarchy throughout Britain in 1850 without even prior notification. This move infuriated the Erastian Whigs, including Lord Russell, who perceived the state's authority as being ignored by a Church which owed toleration and concession to state magnanimity. As Machin points out British toleration had come to a crisis: it would either go forward in spite of the provocation of the hierarchy or it would recede on account of it. Nationwide the dissenters were as much divided over the crisis as over the Maynooth Grant: some were predominantly anti-papist and some were predominantly voluntary (i.e. they wanted no state interference in the sphere of religion). Certainly the Ecclesiastical Titles Act (1850) which, in response to the Pope's move, half-heartedly attempted to restrict Roman designs beyond the

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52. L.C. 27-3-1852.

53. *Ibid*, 24-4-1852.

qualified measure of toleration enshrined in the 1829 Emancipation Act obstructed the process of growing toleration in Britain. Such obstruction was clearly in tune with great sections of public opinion, and anti-Catholic feeling was demonstrated long after the immediate crisis of 1850: eg. with riots at Greenock (1851) and Stockport (1852). But the agitation was the last nationwide exhibition of 'no-popery' feeling and the Titles Act (repealed in 1871) was the last measure of discrimination between religious denominations passed by a British government<sup>54</sup>. Evidence in Leicester, based on newspaper contents, suggests that the town was typical in this respect. After 1852 the issues concerning Roman Catholicism became progressively less salient in election campaigns.

The 1852 election produced a sensational victory for Walmesley and Gardner, both with a majority around the five hundred mark. Allegations of bribery were this time unproven<sup>55</sup>. However the month before the election the 'Mercury' claimed that radical canvassers had discovered that outvoters in the villages lying between Glenfield and Mountsorrel had been ordered by *Someone* (original emphasis) not to promise votes to Walmesley and Gardner. The 'Mercury' failed to identify who but drew attention to the Earl of Stamford, and stressed a need for the ballot<sup>56</sup>.

The 1852 result did not revive local agitation for reform, although the issues of frame-rent and trucking continued to excite the stockingers. Walmesley kept his 1847 election promise to the stockingers and voted for Halford's 1853 Payment of Wages bill, whilst John Biggs announced a 'discontinuance of frame-rents' within his own firm. The outbreak of the Crimean War forced domestic issues into the background and created a temporary regrouping in local politics: i.e. the moderates readily accepted the war and were thus reconciled with the ultra-radicals, although a few of the latter supported John Bright's 'Peace party'.

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54. Machin (1977), p227.

55. Victoria, p219.

56. L.M. 26-6-1852.



The onset of peace, however, revived the old rivalries. In 1856, following the death of Richard Gardner, John Biggs was elected in his place without recourse to a poll<sup>57</sup>.

But the 1857 general election saw the moderates determined to oust Walmesley, and religious feeling was certainly important in the campaign. During his parliamentary career Walmesley had, like John Biggs, advocated secular education. But more controversial was his leadership of what was known as the 'Sunday League'. This organisation essentially sought to liberalize the Sunday observance laws, but its only immediate objective was to open the British Museum and National Gallery to the public on Sunday afternoons. For this and other reasons John Dove Harris (son of Richard Harris, M. P. 1848–52) announced his candidature with the intention of defeating Walmesley<sup>58</sup>. Harris was a Churchman, but was promised support by almost all the dissenting leaders, many of whom, like the Independent Rev. Mursell and the Quakers John and Edward S. Ellis, had long been associated with the radical left. Their adhesion was no doubt made easier by Harris's opposition to Church rates, although this issue had become locally less important since 1849, when the Liberals finally gained control of all the parish vestries and compulsory payments of Church rates in Leicester were effectively scrapped<sup>59</sup>. In his election address Harris stated:

'... My estimation of the Sabbath, not only as a Divine appointment, but as an institution of the highest importance in a social point of view, especially to the industrial classes, would lead me strenuously to oppose any legislative interference which would have a tendency to assimilate it to Continental usages. I am opposed to the compulsory exaction of money for ecclesiastical purposes, because I believe it to be not less prejudicial to the interests of the Established Church than to the general progress of Christianity ...'<sup>60</sup>

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57. *Victoria*, pp219–220.  
60. *L.J.* 20–3–1857.

58. *L.C.* 21–3–1857.

59. *Patterson*, p259.

But opposition to Walmesley was not entirely on religious grounds, for several leading moderates who had backed Wilde and Palmer in 1852 objected to his general leftish politics. J. Whetstone was a notable example: he said that he objected to Walmesley more on account of his support for Halford's bill to abolish frame-rent than for his views on the Sunday question<sup>61</sup>. The moderates thus reinforced with dissent devoted their efforts towards contrasting the 'virtues' of Harris with the 'vices' of Walmesley, whilst John Biggs seems to have been left alone.

The 'Chronicle' drew attention to a series of handbills posted around the borough, which invariably raised the Sunday issue. One was entitled: 'To the Working-men of Leicester' and signed 'A Working Man': it exclaimed:

'... Harris will keep Sunday as it is – and should be so – Walmesley will make it like France – working seven days a week – we work long enough as it is ...'

Another was headed: 'Vote for Harris, like me – by 'A Radical Elector'.<sup>62</sup> It appears therefore that a significant feature of Harris's campaign was an endeavour to win the support of the working-class section of the electorate by exaggerating the effects of the 'Sunday League' proposals, in order to convince the working-men that a return of Walmesley would be against their own interests.

The handbills further sought to elicit the support of the stockingers over the issue of frame-rent, by pointing out that the Harris family had already abolished the system within its own business, whereas Walmesley was ignored and ineffective in his parliamentary attempts to support them: i.e. his support for Halford's abortive 1853 bill and his defeated motion for the establishing of a select committee for examining the continual inequalities in the representational system – especially for working-men<sup>63</sup>.

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61. L.M. 28-3-1857.

62. L.C. 28-3-1857.

63. L.M. 28-2-1857.

Similarly they tried to encourage the hosiery trade as a whole to identify with its own leadership against outsiders: i.e. 'Harris is in our own trade – Walmesley is a coal merchant' (original emphasis).

The handbill campaign also appealed to sabbatarian supporters: one terminated:

' ... I need not say, Sir, that Mr. John Dove Harris has no sympathy with the Sabbath desecration. In fact I think the difference amounts to this, the former (Walmesley) is a foe to Christianity: the latter (Harris) is a friend ...'

And Harris invoked parochial prejudice, as the 'Chronicle' had done in 1847:

' ... Harris is Leicester born and bred – Walmesley is not ... Harris spends all his money among us – Walmesley does not (except during elections) ...'

Finally, in his handbill campaign, Harris courted moderate opinion by attacking the general leftish politics of Walmesley:

' ... Walmesley is a Chartist – would create chaos and disorder in society ... a demagogue – a boisterous medlar in politics: Harris is – a moderate, progressive, gradual reformer – a true patriot – has in him the elements of a real legislator'<sup>64</sup>

Naturally enough the 'Mercury' defended Walmesley, claiming that Harris was not really very different politically to him, so was not offering anything essentially different. It published a letter written (ostensibly) by a recently enfranchised Sunday school teacher, who had made a study of the three election candidates. The letter firstly defended John Biggs, pointing out that no party had said a word against him – that he was declared by all as a faithful servant, a liberal benefactor to the town, and 'entitled to the highest honour which the town can confer upon him'. Secondly the

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64. L.C. 28-3-1857.

writer praised Walmesley, although he did hold reservations concerning the candidate's motion to open the British Museum and National Gallery on Sundays: nevertheless he stressed that Walmesley was only attempting to do for the poor what was already done for the rich with impunity: i.e. the Sunday opening of the local General News Room. Thirdly, if the writer had had anything to say about J. D. Harris it wasn't published!<sup>65</sup> Actually the letter closely reflected the consensus of opinion among the local Liberal delegates, who, at a meeting held in March 1857, agreed to support Biggs and Walmesley despite some reservations concerning the latter's attitude towards the Sabbath question<sup>66</sup>.

On the Conservative side the whole attitude towards the 1857 election in Leicester seems to have been one of cynical aloofness<sup>67</sup>. This is apparent in a report in the 'Journal' on the 13th March 1857:

'... His (Walmesley's) anti-Sabbath predilections have stirred up that portion of the Liberals, which prefers the Bible to the Charter, to resist him, and we understand that Mr. J. D. H. has consented to stand and that he will receive the support of the Evangelical dissenters and moderate Liberals ...'<sup>68</sup>

The following week the 'Journal' stated its own opinion:

'... For ourselves we regard the contest pretty much with indifference. Mr. Harris's political creed does not, as far as we are aware, differ from Sir Joshua's by one iota, and with regard to the Sunday question Sir Joshua has given that up as a legislative question altogether. We know not therefore upon what principle his former supporters, who have seceded to the opposition, justify their defection. That, however, is their business ...'<sup>69</sup>

But for once the 'Journal' was not entirely in tune with the local Conservative party. During late March 1857 a meeting of Conservative electors passed two resolutions: not to forward a candidate and, despite opposition to his demand for the ballot, to

65. L.M. 21-3-1857.

67. Note: or rather the 'Journal' was cynical. As illustrated the Conservatives opted to support Harris - it was rare for the parties to be at odds with their respective organs. The 'Morning Advertiser' later claimed this support was due to a Conservative dislike of Walmesley. But not so much on account of his extremism: rather it was because, despite his extremism, he was a reliable, staunch support of the Whig Government in Parliament. (L.M. 2-2-1861, p7).

68. L.J. 13-3-1857.

66. Ibid, 14-3-1857.

69. Ibid, 20-3-1857

support Harris<sup>70</sup>. The 'Journal' did support the first resolution but opposed the pledge of support for Harris, on principle, stating that it did not believe the Sunday issue to be at the root of the opposition to Walmesley, and again stressing that Harris was but little different to Biggs and Walmesley. Harris had, after all, voted for the ultra-radicals in 1852, whilst his 1857 election address could mean anything from diluted Conservatism to five points of the Charter:

'... We disagree with Sir Joshua's politics, and we disagree with those of Mr. Harris which we believe to be the same ...'<sup>71</sup>

The 'Journal's' view of Harris was thus curiously akin to that of the 'Mercury'. This was not lost on the 'Chronicle' which accused its two adversaries of deliberate concurrence over the affair<sup>72</sup>.

The by now more familiar religious question of Romanism was still simmering in 1857, although the matter appears to have been given rather less attention by the local press than in 1847 and 1852, especially as regards the 'Chronicle'. Nevertheless the 'Journal' reported that a petition to Parliament signed by nearly four thousand Leicester inhabitants demanding repeal of the Maynooth Endowment Act was presented to John Biggs<sup>73</sup>. The 'Journal' did publish a couple of articles during the month leading up to the election. One was by the secretary of the 'National Club', George Rich, who stressed the need for an end to the Maynooth Endowment, and instead for the R. C. priesthood to be educated at various colleges in Ireland, already open to them, in which they could mix with protestants of their own age group and thereby become less 'imbued with that servile obedience, which destroys the love of Country, and the better feelings of the heart'. But the other article, a letter entitled 'A True Protestant', points out that since the Maynooth Grant had been operative before the 1801 Act of Union, Britain should rather have objected and acted more strongly

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70. L.M. 28-3-1857.  
73. L.J. 13-3-1857.

71. L.J. 27-3-1857.

72. L.C. 28-3-1857.

on the assumption of ecclesiastical titles by the Roman Church (1850): i.e. to have resisted the 'arrogance of the Holy See'<sup>74</sup>. Actually the matter seemed highly marginal in the election campaign itself, although Harris did try to make political capital out of it by indicating that in Parliament Walmesley had abstained on the Maynooth question, which was, according to Harris, unsatisfactory.

At the election hustings, according to the 'Mercury', a crowd of 10–12,000 voted for Walmesley and Biggs:

'... Indeed the number of hands held up for Mr. Harris presented by far the most miserable minority that has ever characterised a contested election in Leicester for many years ...'<sup>75</sup>

But the poll demanded on behalf of J. D. Harris produced a different outcome. Biggs and Harris were returned and Walmesley defeated. 'Victoria' claims that Walmesley's defeat (by 178 votes) might have been worse save for the support he received from the local drink trade, who were alarmed by Harris's association with the 'Temperance Movement'<sup>76</sup>, although the 'Chronicle' claimed licensed victualler support for Harris also<sup>77</sup>.

Judging by the immediate reaction to the election result: i.e. the apparent satisfaction of the 'Journal'<sup>78</sup> and fury of the 'Mercury'<sup>79</sup>: it seems fair to assess Harris as a definite moderate, despite the pre-election talk of his political similarity with Walmesley.

By early 1859, during the run up to the general election of that year, the issues of Leicester's parliamentary politics were more closely linked to those of the House of Commons than had previously been the case since 1832. The reason being that

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74. *Ibid*, 27–3–1857.  
77. *L.C.* 28–3–1857.

75. *L.M.* 28–3–1857.  
78. *L.J.* 3–4–1857.

76. *Victoria*, p220.  
79. *L.M.* 4–4–1857.

whereas the question of parliamentary/franchise reform had always been a feature of Leicester's politics, it had not been in the forefront of politics at national level since 1832. But by 1859 reform was again in the air and important sections of both major parties in Parliament were proposing, albeit along different lines, changes to the parliamentary suffrage. These developments marked the early stages of a process which, after the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865, was to gather an unstoppable momentum and culminate in the 1867 Reform Act.

On the Conservative side their minority government of 1858–9, led by Lord Derby and Disraeli, introduced a Reform bill which mainly sought to bring the electoral qualification for the counties into line with that of the boroughs. Thus the county £50 franchise was to be reduced to £10. But the bill did include provision for a lodger franchise for those paying a minimum rent of 8/- per week. In addition there were other clauses, dubbed 'fancy franchises', which were an important factor in the bill's defeat, due in part to opposition from the right of the Conservative party in Parliament<sup>80</sup>.

The Leicester Conservatives felt the time was ripe to forward a candidate of their own, and selected a local barrister, William Unwin Heygate. He was widely regarded as a liberal-Conservative and he certainly defended much that was in the Derby-Disraeli Reform bill, including the measures outlined above and a savings bank qualification of either £60 or £50. At a local Conservative meeting, however, Heygate firmly rejected anything approaching universal suffrage on grounds that such a measure would result in the working-class swamping all the other classes. Rather he preferred there be a way found to admit the best of the working classes – to make the franchise a privilege – the reward of industry, intelligence and good conduct. Towards this end he advocated an extension of education and the scrapping of the

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80. *Victoria*, p221.

remaining paper duties (taxes on knowledge)<sup>81</sup>. Heygate's standpoint on reform is further evidenced in his election address:

'... For my own part, whilst anxious to promote all measures tending to the removal of proved abuse, I am, nevertheless, opposed to any attempt to assimilate the Constitution of this Country to those of America and France, and although ready to vote for an extension of the Franchise both in counties and boroughs, I could not support those wild schemes of Reform which have lately been advocated by certain politicians ...'<sup>82</sup>

It seems probable from this that Heygate was slightly to the left of the Conservative government, for, as the 'Mercury' readily fastened upon, Disraeli, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, was reputed to have:

'... declared unreservedly that he must view 'with the greatest alarm' any proposals, however moderate, for the reduction of the parliamentary qualification in the Boroughs'<sup>83</sup>

Meanwhile parliamentary moves towards reform on the side of the Whig-Liberal party, then in opposition, were led by the radical John Bright, whose reforming movement in Birmingham was now more moderate in its aims and less Chartist in tone<sup>84</sup>. Early in the 1859 election campaign the moderate Leicester Liberals, supported by the 'Chronicle', believed that the local radicals, seemingly supporting Bright, would also tone down their politics and thereby pave the way for a reconciliation between the two estranged sections of the local Liberal party. The 'Chronicle' made this clear in its edition of 9th April when it claimed that the old understanding among Liberals, that moderates and extremists should share the borough representation, was obtaining recognition for the first time since before 1847<sup>85</sup>. The 'Chronicle' gave a wholehearted welcome to this and suggested that Harris and Biggs should be the representatives, and at a subsequent meeting chaired

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81. L.M. 23-4-1859, p2.  
84. Victoria, p221.

82. L.C. 30-4-1859.  
85. L.C. 9-4-1859.

83. L.M. 9-4-1859, p4.



by the moderate William Baines to promote Liberal unity the following resolution was passed:

'... That in order to secure the united action of the whole Liberal Party, some degree of mutual forbearance will always be necessary, and since it is evident that without that united action there is a great risk of a Tory candidate being returned, it is the earnest desire of this Meeting that such forbearance should be exercised among us in the present instance, and that all personal feelings being subjected to the general good of the Country, the Liberal Party should agree to return Messrs. Biggs and Harris as their representatives'<sup>86</sup>

But it was all an illusion! It soon became clear that the Leicester radicals were as leftish as ever, and out to avenge Walmesley's defeat. Indeed the 'Chronicle' should have known better because, in the very edition it claimed the left had moderated, it reported that another ultra-left candidate had been chosen to fight alongside John Biggs<sup>87</sup>. And a fortnight later there appeared a report of a meeting of Liberal electors, who had indicated that the new candidate, unanimously adopted along with Biggs, was the man selected to wreak Chartist revenge on Harris for getting rid of Walmesley. This new candidate was Joseph Noble, a local G. P. and former mayor, who was revered for his kindness in offering his professional services free of charge to the poor<sup>88</sup>.

The continued ultra-radical policy of the left was apparent in Biggs's and Noble's election addresses. Both called for the extension of the suffrage to the working-man (or 'taxation with representation' as Biggs chose to call it), the ballot and more equal electoral districts. Harris, who was to stand again, was denounced for his 'unconstitutional' moves to get himself elected. But the radicals were particularly hostile towards the Derby-Disraeli Reform bill and expressed satisfaction at its rejection by Parliament<sup>89</sup>. As they were quick to note it proposed neither the ballot nor any reduction in the £10 borough qualification. They remarked:

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86. L.M. 23-4-1859, p4.  
89. L.M. 2-4-1859, p4.

87. L.C. 9-4-1859.

88. *Ibid*, 23-4-1859.

'... (The) Humbug of Disraeli – a charlatan – all for private reasons and personal ambition – no vote for the Working-class ... no equal distribution of seats – a plan for exalting the political influence of the counties at the expense of the industrial interests ...'<sup>90</sup>

In turn the moderates attacked Biggs and Noble. The 'Chronicle' remarked that Noble's speech to the meeting of Liberal electors 'teemed with animosity towards Harris', and that: 'The *animus* oozes out of every sentence' (original emphasis). The 'Chronicle' stressed that the universal suffrage policies of Biggs and Noble would destroy the influence of the middle-classes:

'... prostrating at the feet of numbers the intelligence, the education, the respectability of other classes of inhabitants leading to a degeneracy in the personnel of the Commons House akin to that which has of late years been visible in the council chamber ...'<sup>91</sup>

In a calmer mood, earlier in the campaign, the 'Chronicle' stated the prevailing moderate view:

'... Without going so far, even, as Mr. Bright, the existing electors run the risk of neutralising their own present influences; for nearly all addition which may be made to the town constituencies will be from a class below themselves in the social system. Every movement in that direction is experimental, and more or less perilous to the position of the Middle Class voters ... . *Household suffrage* would probably lead to ultra-left M. P.s. being elected ... . Same would occur elsewhere ... a complete and boisterous change in the representative system ... . In asking the Moderate Liberals to help them, therefore, the ultras expect their proposed allies to commit political suicide, and to submit to political annihilation ... . There is, however, a class of inhabitants to whom the vote might be entrusted – what may be called the picked men of the Working class, whose general fitness for the suffrage would be nearly tested by the social position they have earned by their own sobriety, industry, and frugality. This body of men are identified with the best interests of the community, and would exercise their power in the long run for the obtainment of useful measures. They form also the representatives of their own less-fortunate neighbours, and, if enfranchised, all that is legitimate in working-class aspirations would find a voice through the order of men here described ...'<sup>92</sup>

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90. *Ibid*, 12-3-1859, p8.

91. L.C. 30-4-1859.

92. *Ibid*, 12-4-1859.

Two important points can be drawn from the above. The first is that the 'Chronicle' and the moderates had definitely moved further to the right, for in 1852 their candidates Wilde and Palmer were prepared to countenance household suffrage<sup>93</sup>. Indeed their 1859 position was to the right of Lord John Russell. Sandwiched between Disraeli's and Bright's proposals, Russell, although no longer leader of his party, suggested lowering the qualification from £10 to £8 householders. The 'Chronicle', calculating that such a measure would more than double the Leicester electorate, rejected the idea on the grounds that the working-class would thereby swamp the other classes in the electorate<sup>94</sup>. Actually this assessment was not without foundation. The outcome of the show of hands at the Market Place hustings in 1857, when, in contrast to the actual poll, a large crowd of locals (the majority of whom can be assumed to have been unenfranchised) clearly preferred Walmesley to Harris, seems a fairly reliable indication<sup>95</sup>. But then again, as all were well aware (and shortly to be reminded again), the ultra-radicals could win anyway under the existing franchise. The second point is that the moderates' 1859 outlook on urban class-politics was strikingly akin to that of the Conservative candidate, Heygate. As the 'Chronicle' pointed out:

'... liberal Conservatives and conservative Liberals are virtually at one in this election ...'<sup>96</sup>

But there is no evidence that even a tacit alliance between the Conservatives and Liberal moderates existed in the 1859 election campaign in Leicester. It was coincidental that both parties had put up only one candidate apiece for the two-seat borough. This was the most the Conservatives had ever done since 1837, whilst the moderates were anxious to avoid all indication of trying to monopolize the borough: i.e. they wanted to share the representation with the ultra-radicals. On the Conservative side the 'Journal' made its own position clear:

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93. *Ibid.* 3-4-1852.  
96. *L.C.* 30-4-1859.

94. *Ibid.* 9-4-1859.

95. *L.M.* 28-3-1857, p4.

' ... All professed Conservatives will, of course, pledge themselves to Mr. Heygate, and in regard to their second votes they must strenuously refuse them to any other candidate, except upon the distinct understanding that they are to have a vote for their own man in return ...'<sup>97</sup>

Wedged between the two parliamentary sets of reform proposals and opposed to both (Harris voting against the second reading of the Conservative Reform bill), the moderates had little to offer but caution. However, they were still backed by the dissenting ministers and therefore tried to make sabbatarianism again an election issue. To this end Harris's election address said little other than that his politics were 'well known'.<sup>98</sup> i.e. he was clearly fighting the 1859 election on his 1857 platform in which the 'Sunday League' issue was to the forefront. But this proved more difficult than in 1857, for Noble and Biggs were not so vulnerable as Walmesley on this question<sup>99</sup>. Dr. Noble himself did admit that he understood Walmesley's 'Sunday League' views, but that he would not have pursued them (as Walmesley did) without the clear support of his local party. Noble supported Church-rate abolition, though an Anglican, like Walmesley, but he opposed disestablishment. In the latter issue Noble was thus in disagreement with his partner John Biggs. However Biggs seemed to accept that the holding of different views did not necessarily entail hostility. Also the issue of Romanism no longer seemed capable of rousing strong feelings. The changed attitude is clearly evidenced by the fact that for the first time, in the election campaigns here under scrutiny, candidates dared to publicly support continuance of the Maynooth Grant. Noble's election address clearly stated that he would not oppose the grant<sup>100</sup>, and Heygate said the same on the grounds that he considered repeal dangerous to R. C. loyalty, though he admitted the difficulty of accommodating R. C. rights as citizens with protestant scruples<sup>101</sup>.

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97. L.J. 22-4-1859, p5.  
100. L.M. 16-5-1859, p2.

98. L.M. 9-4-1859, p4.  
101. L.J. 19-4-1859, p6.

99. Victoria, p221.

The 1859 general election produced a national victory for Lord Palmerston, and local victories for Biggs and Noble. There was the usual post-election acrimony: the 'Chronicle' accusing the victors of misrepresentation and intimidation, while Heygate attributed his narrow defeat to the 'conduct of those Conservatives who sacrificed their political principles to the claims of private friendship'. It is not clear to whom Heygate was referring, but a likely explanation points to the personage of John Biggs, and possibly to J. D. Harris also. Both were well-to-do and Biggs was noted for his lavish generosity, and thus his friendship was presumably not limited to his political sympathisers<sup>102</sup>. It is quite noticeable too that the other ultra-radical candidates of the period: eg. Walmesley, Gardner and Noble: invariably appeared to receive the brunt of the anti-radical hostility, whilst Biggs, significantly unopposed in 1856, seemed to some extent above criticism.

Though possibly worsened by his temperance views and his defects as a speaker, the poor showing of J. D. Harris in the 1859 election led to considerable heart-searching among the Liberal moderates. The consensus of opinion pointed towards a formal alliance with the Conservatives, at least at local level: i.e. for Harris and Heygate to lead a common front against the radicals. This was apparent in the speeches given at a meeting and dinner of Harris's supporters after his defeat. One speaker, John Ellis, said that he wished the two names of Whig and Tory were sunk: they were held out as bugbears to keep those apart who were really agreed, and that if the country was to be well-governed, it must be by those two sections of men acting together. Ellis stressed that he wanted to see a large extension of the suffrage, but did not want to establish 'class legislation' in Britain, and claimed that the Derby-Disraeli Reform bill was precisely intended to destroy 'class legislation'. He admitted that the working-classes had not yet obtained their fair share, but he was not prepared to give it all up to that class and swamp the middle-classes

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102. *Victoria*, p223.

altogether. Another speaker, Mr. Walker, pointed out that present day Toryism was not like in the old days of Mr. Paget, but rather it had been merged into Conservatism, and that there was now little difference between liberal Conservatives and moderate Liberals. He said that he had voted for Heygate, deeming him to be safer than Biggs or Noble<sup>103</sup>. In contrast the prevailing gulf between moderate and ultra-radical views on the suffrage was highlighted by a third speaker, Mr. Kempson. The 'Journal' published a report on Kempson's speech two years after it was given:

'... They were opposed to extension of the suffrage without regard to fitness; the doctrine of the inalienable rights of man was only fit for a schoolboy. They must try to improve the constituencies so that they might send better members. The fact that they sent such as they now often did was the greatest proof they could have that the majority were not yet fit for the franchise, and he only wondered that the Country was so well-governed as it was ...'<sup>104</sup>

The Conservatives, however, were cool towards union with the moderates. Religious differences and political memories still fought against a thorough reconciliation. Neither group was essentially prepared to surrender its identity and each wanted union under its own aegis. Moreover Heygate had done well in the 1859 election, and maybe the gradual re-emergence of the party as a viable, national alternative to Whig-Liberalism encouraged the local party to preserve itself and exploit division within the Liberal party. The formation of a new local Conservative society in celebration of Heygate's achievement was undoubtedly an indication of their growing optimism<sup>105</sup>.

The situation became acute early in 1861 when the sudden death of Dr. Noble made a by-election necessary. The Conservatives were not prepared to make concessions, so both Heygate and Harris announced their decisions to stand again. The two groups were therefore in direct opposition with each other for the first time

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103. *L.M.* 21-5-1859, p7.

104. *L.J.* 1-2-1861, p5.

105. *Victoria*, p221.

since before 1847. In January the 'Journal' stated its opinion on the current state of politics:

'... We believed, as we believe now, that there is a mass of public opinion, which rejecting the distinctive name of Conservative, is to all intents and purposes conservative; we believed that a large portion of the best educated and most estimable of our townsmen were in favour of a liberal policy, which should at the same time not be a democratic one, and we urged upon them to give their votes to Mr. Heygate as the representative of their own opinions. We ask them to do so still ... . If such people ... go on supporting men of extreme political views ... they must be prepared to take the consequences in the adoption eventually of some measure even more democratic than Lord J. Russell's bill ...'<sup>106</sup>

On the suffrage issue Heygate supported Lord Derby's proposal to reform the electoral districts, a lodger franchise, and a reduction in the rental franchise, although he declined to specify by how much. Rather he preferred to express vague notions of adding to the franchise a number of intelligent, industrious artisans – just as the 'Chronicle' had done in 1859. He was likewise inclined to fudge the issue of Church-rates, claiming that he held a liberal outlook on the matter and suggested that objectors should seek disqualification from the vestry roll for one year to avoid payment. This 'solution' had already been advocated by Cambridge M. P. James Stuart<sup>107</sup>.

Like the Conservatives, the ultra-radical Liberals saw no reason to seek alliances or tone down their politics, although from the onset of the 1861 campaign the 'Mercury' was decidedly jittery at the prospect of a three cornered contest, and suggested that *if* a more popular candidate emerged then Harris should stand down<sup>108</sup>. The coolness shown towards Harris at a meeting of the Liberal registration society and the subsequent enthusiasm towards a rival at the meeting of Liberal electors were stages in a process which led to the adoption of Harris's rival as a Liberal candidate. This was Peter Alfred Taylor, a radical of the younger generation – of the J. S. Mill

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106. L.J. 18-1-1861, p5.

107. L.M. 19-1-1861, p8.

108. *Ibid*, p4.

type – individualistic, humanitarian and internationalist. He was an admirer of the Italian revolutionary, Mazzini (for which he was castigated by the 'Journal'<sup>109</sup>), a champion of universal suffrage and direct taxation, and a partner in the firm of Courtauld. He had previously contested Newcastle borough. A meeting of non-electors declared their overwhelming support for Taylor, who exclaimed to them:

'... Then there arose the Anti-Corn Law League, and in that struggle both I and my Father took our humble part – We advocated political rights and commercial rights – but we were denounced by the working-class as middle-class men – till Chartism cut its own throat in 1848 ...'<sup>110</sup>

And, he told a meeting of Liberal electors:

'... I am sick of seeing the great Radical Party dragged at the heels of the two great parties in the state. For my part I shall think a great political gain has been achieved when reactionism, whether it calls itself Whig or Tory, recedes into a compact phalanx on the one side, and we have the other, a pure body of Reformers. I care not how small, for we shall be then in the right position for advocating the question of reform ...'<sup>111</sup>

Taylor's radicalism was thus self-evident, but on the question of the ballot he believed the necessary elimination of bribery and coercion could best be achieved by other means. Although, unlike many Whigs and Liberals, he did not regard the ballot as 'un-English', he disliked secrecy and viewed the ballot at best as a temporary cure for a temporary evil. However, he was not entirely out of tune with Victorian radical thought on the issue: J. S. Mill and Fergus O'Connor held similar opinions<sup>112</sup>. Taylor was also cool towards equal electoral districts, preferring a system whereby entrance to the House of Commons would require a minimum number of votes. Though denying being a socialist he supported income tax and, like his late twentieth century counterparts, opposed another form of taxation:

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109. L.J. 25-1-1861, p5.  
112. Kinzer, pp237-249.

110. *Ibid*, 1-2-1861, p6.

111. L.M. 26-1-1861, p3.



Taylor's professed argument for universal suffrage also seems a trifle individualistic, by bearing no hint of being based on class warfare. In his election address he stressed:

' ... I would show my allegiance to the principles of our constitution by making a man a voter because he was an Englishman, and not because he happened to pay a certain rental ...'<sup>114</sup>

On the religion side he opposed disestablishment, but denounced Church-rates and state endowments for ecclesiastical purposes. He was therefore against the Maynooth Grant, although, perceiving Rome as a temporal rather than a spiritual power, he did not wish to make Maynooth the object of sectarian attack. Indeed he was infinitely more against the protestant ascendancy in Ireland<sup>115</sup>.

Supported by the 'Chronicle' Harris and the moderates attacked the parliamentary record of the late Dr. Noble. Apparently he was seldom in Parliament and his death occurred whilst on a prolonged visit to Spain. The 'Chronicle' dubbed him as 'Walmesley's locum tenens in Parliament'<sup>116</sup>, and considered Taylor's adoption a firm barrier to reconciliation between the two wings of the Liberal party, and would render a Conservative success probable. The 'Chronicle' commented:

' ... Seeing how utterly without a chance Mr. Taylor is, it is the duty of all Liberals, without exception, who desire to 'keep out' the Conservatives to poll as early as they can, without waiting, for Mr. Harris ...'<sup>117</sup> (original emphasis)

It seems that Harris and his supporters, in contrast with their 1859 shift towards the right on the suffrage question, had now adopted a more reformist stance. Harris now

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113. L.M. 26-1-1861, p3.  
116. L.C. 12-1-1861.

114. Ibid, 2-2-1861, p4.  
117. Ibid, 2-2-1861.

115. Ibid, p2.

wanted a £6 franchise (the 'Chronicle' in 1859 thought an £8 franchise was too radical) but said he would support the current Whig government's Reform bill, which provided for an £8 franchise, and the old Chartist demand for the abolition of the property qualification for M.P.s. His religious policy however mirrored Taylor's: i.e. he opposed disestablishment, Church-rates, and appropriation of the public money for ecclesiastical purposes. The 'Journal' readily perceived that Harris and his supporters were less moderate than was generally supposed<sup>118</sup>.

Right up till the poll the two wings attacked one another. Taylor accused Harris of being two-faced over the licensing legislation – that he had told the brewers he opposed it, but told the temperance crowd that he supported it<sup>119</sup>. Moreover Taylor rebuffed a suggestion that he himself should stand down on the grounds that many radicals would vote for Heygate to keep Harris out<sup>120</sup>.

Even so both sides were anticipating possible defeat, and warnings to the effect came from the press outside Leicester. For example the Whig 'Leeds Mercury' expressed great regret to find that Leicester was in danger of being represented by a Conservative<sup>121</sup>. Like in recent elections the moderates expressed a forlorn hope of unity, as the chairman of a meeting of Harris's supporters exclaimed:

'... It is an acknowledged fact that there has been in Leicester, for the last ten or twelve years, two distinct sections of the Liberal Party, each having its different registration offices and also its various distinct organisations ... each section should choose ONE member ... Union of Party ...'<sup>122</sup> (original emphasis)

The radical 'Mercury' claimed there was no material difference in the political creeds of Harris and Taylor, and that many Whigs supported Taylor whilst many advanced Liberals supported Harris. Seemingly losing its confidence the 'Mercury' commented:

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118. L.J. 8-2-1861, p5.  
121. L.J. 18-1-1861, p8.

119. L.M. 2-2-1861, p2.  
122. L.M. 26-1-1861, p3.

120. *Ibid*, 9-2-1861, p2.

' ... It is like a family difference, which, in being healed, appears to both parties singularly trifling ...'<sup>123</sup>

The apprehension on both sides of the Liberal divide proved to be well-founded. Although at the hustings Taylor won easily, the poll called for by Harris and Heygate produced a sensational outcome – the first Conservative victory in Leicester since 1835, and by a considerable margin at that! Taylor came third in the poll. In its February 8th 1861 edition the 'Journal' boasted:

' ... Mr. Heygate has polled ... the highest number of votes ever obtained by a candidate in Leicester, with one exception which was altogether of a peculiar character ... . It is a fact worth noting that in a borough which is rapidly rising to the first rank of English commercial towns, and which moreover has been looked upon as the stronghold of even Chartist opinions, 1,600 men could be found to give their votes for a Conservative ... . There are ... in both the House of Commons and emphatically in Leicester two Liberal Parties ... (which) cannot unite as diametrically opposed ...'<sup>124</sup>

But on this last point the 'Journal' was ultimately proved wrong, for their defeat taught the Liberals that neither wing could stand on its own, and the radicals were therefore forced to abandon attempts to dominate the borough. Their swiftly changing attitude was clear in the 'Mercury's' post-mortem on the 1861 election. It stressed that the 'townsman' of Leicester: i.e. the Pagets, Harrises, Ellises and Biggses: were, through personal ambitions, the source of all the trouble and division, and advocated their retirement from parliamentary politics, and that the borough henceforth be represented by two strangers, drawn from the Whig and radical sections of the Liberal party respectively<sup>125</sup>.

On their part the moderates rejected absorption into a Conservative party they could not hope to dominate, instead preferring toleration of the radicals within a reunited Liberal party. The Leicester moderates thus made the same sort of choice as

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124. L.J. 8-2-1861, p5.

125. L.M. 16-2-1861, p8.

Gladstone in national politics: i.e. Gladstone finally rejected joining Lord Derby's party and went on to become Liberal prime minister in 1868.

Events moved rapidly after the 1861 by-election. June of that year saw the formation of a united Liberal registration society, based on the old compromise by which the borough would be shared equally between moderates and radicals. But the radicals may have been moved to compromise for financial reasons when John Biggs, probably the chief source of their funds, suffered financial collapse. Biggs took no part in the reconciliation, resigned his seat in February 1862, and maintained an absolute political silence for the remaining ten years of his life. In accordance with the agreement his seat was taken, unopposed, by P. A. Taylor. In 1864 the 'Chronicle' and the 'Mercury' became one newspaper<sup>126</sup>.

In the 1865 general election (the last on the old franchise) electoral reform was a dramatic issue. Harris and Taylor were duly adopted as Liberal candidates. But the alliance was not strained, partly because this time the radicals avoided being committed to a specific degree of reform, and partly because the moderates perceived that the present electorate was becoming increasingly Conservative. Therefore they deemed that the local Liberal party needed 'new blood' if it was to survive. (Bill Lancaster attributes this growing Conservatism and need for 'new Liberal blood' to the collapse of the apprenticeship system and its attendant freemen's rights. The proportion of mainly Liberal-supporting, freemen framework knitters in the Leicester electorate had steadily declined from 16% in 1837 to 9% by 1861<sup>127</sup>). Heygate stood again for the Conservatives committed to a measure of parliamentary reform, but was hostile to the £6 householder franchise. He was defeated by a small margin, and the united Liberals went on to represent Leicester continuously until the Conservatives scored again in the 1900 'khaki' election<sup>128</sup>.

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126. *Victoria*, pp222-3.

127. *Lancaster*, pp77-78.

128. *Victoria*, p242. See also Ch. 6, p139.

Far-reaching changes then began to take place. The 1867 Reform Act increased the Leicester electorate from 5,736 to 15,161, and the 1870s' developments in party organisation tended to deprive politics of variety, since it diminished the importance of local issues and the influence of local individuals in parliamentary political life<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>129</sup>. *Ibid*, pp223-4.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *(i) Scheme of Analysis used in the Research – Record Linkage*

#### *(ii) Analysis of Voting Behaviour in Leicester (1847–61)*

- (i) A systematic quantitative analysis of mid-nineteenth century, local parliamentary electoral behaviour is feasible only through reference to pollbooks. These provide the individual-level data with which one can test modern theories of voting behaviour in an historical context. Pollbooks enumerate individuals and their electoral behaviour and, frequently, they also list other individual social attributes such as occupation. This individual level information has something in common with that which is found in questionnaires for modern sample surveys upon which many contemporary analyses of British voting behaviour are based, such as that by Butler and Stokes<sup>1</sup>. Pollbooks cannot match the range of enquiry attempted in modern sample surveys, but a simplified historical analysis of voting behaviour can be carried out using pollbook data which parallels survey analysis.

Pollbooks are lists of voters at a given election, accompanied by indications of which candidate(s) they voted for. This is the only feature common to them all. Most pollbooks were printed, but a few still survive in manuscript, and usually indication is given regarding the address of the voter. Their internal arrangements varied considerably. Some grouped the voters by villages, wards or even by streets: other listed their names alphabetically or according to the order of voting. Some distinguish between freemen electors and £10 householders, and between resident voters and outvoters: others do not make such distinctions. It appears that the local printers who usually published

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1. *Butler and Stokes, pp13–15.*

pollbooks acted under no responsibility to anyone, and the consequences of their having had a free hand are evident in the complete lack of standard presentation in the publications. In a few cases pollbooks were published by political bodies, but in general everything depended on the free-will of some small printer looking around for a small profit. During times of political excitement the printer had most incentive to publish a pollbook, so the elections of the 1830s tend to be well represented. But 1868 pollbooks are a rarity, presumably because the great increase in the electorate would have made them too expensive to sell easily. The same consideration doubtless lay behind the absence of pollbooks for very large constituencies: i.e. no pollbook is known for Manchester after 1839, Birmingham after 1841, or for any London seat after 1841. Everything depended on the chances of the printer recovering his costs<sup>2</sup>.

Leicester borough pollbooks were found to be extant<sup>3</sup> for the parliamentary elections of 1847, 1852, 1857, 1859 and 1861. These were published by J. Burton of Haymarket, Leicester. It was the accessibility of these five pollbooks which both enabled research of the nature presented in this thesis to be conducted and actually determined the period which was to be analysed: i.e. it might have been more fitting in the historical sense to have included the 1865 general election in the analysis (the last under the 1832–67 franchise), but no pollbook is extant. This series of pollbooks follows a similar pattern. The resident (borough) voters are segregated on a ward by ward basis – each ward comprising a list of voters arranged in alphabetical order of surnames, followed by forenames or initials. Each individual's street of residence is nearly always recorded, though rarely is the actual house number. Naturally all record the voting choice of each elector, including those who abstained

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2. Vincent (1967), p1.

3. Reference Library, Bishop Street, Leicester.

from voting – the latter being listed separately in 1859 and 1861. In the case of the 1852 and 1857 pollbooks the individual's electoral qualification is indicated: i.e. 'householder', 'freeman', 'scot & lot', or a combination of any two of these. All the series yield similar information regarding the non-resident freemen electors – those who resided within a seven mile radius of the borough and who thus retained their borough franchise after 1832, although only the village of residence is normally recorded.

According to Vincent only a minority of pollbooks give the occupation of each elector. He maintains that it is not clear why occupations featured in the pollbooks at all: whether, for instance, some polling clerk wrote them down, and if so how far he did so on his own imputation, and how far he accepted the self-assessment of the voter: or whether the printer himself added the occupation from common knowledge, or from street directories. From some surviving manuscript pollbooks it would appear that information regarding occupation was expected, since a space under a printed heading was provided for it. But how far this was general is not known, because so few manuscript pollbooks appear to have survived<sup>4</sup>.

The Leicester series of pollbooks generally record the individual's occupation(s). But doubts concerning reliability aside, there is a more fundamental problem in using simple occupational descriptions as an indication of the individual's socio-economic standing within the community. Such descriptions as 'hosier', 'framework-knitter', 'warehousman', 'spinner', 'baker', 'grocer', etc, say little. It cannot be supposed that enfranchisement under the terms of the 1832 Act meant that all electors were relatively affluent or comprised some kind of 'middle-class' within the context of the locality of

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4. Vincent (1967), p3.



the period. Indeed a glance at the range of occupations given in Appendix Four reveals that some voters were engaged in occupations whose descriptions suggest a very low socio-economic status (thereby bearing out the point made by Robert Lowe during the 1866 reform debate, that more working-class men had the vote than was generally realized). Furthermore it cannot be ascertained from the pollbook alone whether an individual 'hosier' or 'grocer' was an affluent person: eg. an employer: or just a poor individual, living a meagre existence in some back-street hovell

But to a great extent the information yielded in the census enumerators' books of 1851 and 1861 would overcome this drawback. In these sources occupational records are more reliable on account of the official status of the census declarations, whilst valuable indicators of socio-economic standing, such as the numbers of household servants and other employees, are also recorded. So too is the age of each individual on census day – evidence crucial to the second focus of this research: i.e. an analysis of political generation.

Therefore it was considered appropriate to carry out a systematic programme of linkage between the two sets of data – pollbook and census. To accomplish this it proved necessary to rearrange the entire pollbook for each election to achieve the highest possible level of linkage. The census returns (available on microfilm<sup>5</sup>) are always arranged by enumeration district, but the key feature is the individual streets. Although some streets do not fit into a single enumeration district, when each street appears the pattern is for the schedules to be recorded house by house down one side, and sooner or later the schedules for the other side turn up. Therefore the pollbook data needed

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5. *Reference Library, Bishop Street, Leicester.*

to be rewritten in an alphabetical street order for the entire borough, so that as each street appeared on the census film the corresponding street data extracted from the pollbooks could be easily referred to and the census data tabulated alongside.

The recorded pollbook data was recorded on sheets marked out as in the specimen which forms Appendix One(B) to the thesis. The far left-hand column on page one for each election began with the 'Abbey', followed by 'Abbey Gate' and 'Abbey Street', and, for the borough voters, ended with 'York Street'. Similar lists were drawn up for the outvoters, beginning with residents of 'Anstey' and ending with 'Woodhouse Eaves'. In the next column electors from each street (or village) were listed in alphabetical order of surnames, followed by given forenames or initials. The only deviation from this pattern occurred when one side of a street lay in a different ward to the other, in which case two consecutive, alphabetical series of surnames were listed: eg. in the lengthy 'Belgrave Gate' one side belonged to 'North St. Margarets' ward whilst the other formed part of 'Middle St. Margarets'. The pollbook-defined occupations were noted in the third column and voting preferences in the fourth. On the specimen sheet, 'Hr/Hg/T' refers to the three candidates in the Leicester parliamentary by-election of 1861, namely Harris, Heygate and Taylor respectively.

But a troublesome problem quickly became clear at this stage. Whereas the Leicester census always indicated the street number of each recorded borough household (although this was apparently not a universal feature of the 1851 and 1861 censuses<sup>6</sup>), the pollbooks seldom did so. As the census evidenced, two or more male householders living in the same street often bore

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6. *Census Guide*, p9.

the same names and sometimes held the same occupation (where occupations were different the pollbook occupation was an invaluable guide to matching), but only one was enfranchised. Question: who was the real elector? In addition there was the irksome task of linking voters in populous streets where many electors were living. This would have been particularly gruelling when scrutinizing those sections of the census films which were characterized by fading, scratches and poor script.

However the drawback was considerably assuaged by reference to the extant published electoral registers of the period, which usually recorded the house number of each enfranchised individual<sup>7</sup>. Utilizing these sources fully often necessitated reference to more than one register (eg. the registers for 1860 and 1861 were used for the 1861 voters) as a significant tendency for electors to move house appears to have characterised the period. Electoral registers are likely to be of a high internal accuracy since, unlike the pollbooks, they were official public documents and were subject to annual, contested revision. House numbers duly obtained from these registers were recorded on the sheets in the 'address' column using red ink. However electoral registers were of no help regarding the outvoters because, like the pollbooks, only the elector's village was usually recorded. An effect of this was that a number of outvoters had to be discounted from the analysis, and the tendency for many individuals within a single village to bear identical names exacerbated the level of uncertainty. For example in 1861 one 'Daniel Palmer', a framework knitter, appeared in the pollbook as a non-resident freeman living in the village of Belgrave. But the 1861 census revealed two Daniel Palmers, living in separate Belgrave residences, both of whom were framework knitters. In this particular case, for an analysis of social class, based on the criteria set out in

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7. *Reference Library, Bishop Street, Leicester.*

section (ii) of this chapter, it was of no matter because both were engaged in the same occupation and neither were employers of any kind. But one was 65 years of age and the other 31, which therefore ruled out 'Daniel Palmer' in the political generational part of the analysis. A similar example occurred in Belgrave in 1852 with a single pollbook, 'John Bentley' – a framework knitter. The 1851 census revealed three John Bentleys, all framework knitters, but with ages of 32, 42 and 67 years respectively.

But with borough and outvoters alike there was the distinct possibility that occasionally the son may have been mistaken for the father, when the former resided with the latter. This should not have occurred in the case of the £10 householder, but was a risk where freeman status combined with identical occupations and (as was so often the case) identical Christian names. There was also likelihood of error when the election was held after the census to which it was linked: eg. the father appears in the 1851 census but dies before the elections of 1852 and 1857, whilst his son becomes enfranchised during the intervening period. But conversely where the election precedes the census (eg. the 1847 election) the enfranchised father dies and thus only the son's name appears at the time of the decennial census of 1851. Therefore whilst it would appear that an element of error was inherent in the linkage, it would not produce bias because these inaccuracies would tend to balance out over the linkage programme as a whole.

The overall scheme, then, was to attempt to link the entire pollbook data for the five parliamentary elections between 1847 and 1861 to the census data. In the case of the 1847 and 1852 elections these were linked to the 1851 census, whilst the 1861 census was used in conjunction with the 1859 and

1861 elections. Regarding the 1857 election, it was decided to link the pollbook data separately to both the 1851 and 1861 censuses. This seemed appropriate because the possible differences in outcome from the dual analysis might serve to demonstrate the limitations of the whole procedure. The effects of this are discussed later in the chapter.

Information gleaned from the census returns was duly recorded alongside the pollbook/electoral register data on the sheets. It will be observed that a column is provided for 'household size': this was adjudged to comprise the householder and family, lodgers and resident apprentices, but excluding resident domestic servants. However, unlike the number of 'domestic servants' and 'other employees' (the latter of which included all apprentices), the household size factor was not utilized in assessing the social class of the individual voter. During the data-gathering stage of the research I did entertain the idea of expressing social class along the lines of Royle who, following others such as Armstrong and Tillot, devised a five-fold social stratification scheme which hinged upon a subtle relationship between occupation, numbers of employees and numbers of domestic servants relative to household size. Hence the column headed 'R.C.' (Royle's class)<sup>8</sup>. However, such an analysis would have been prone to criticism on account of the scheme being devised for the socio-economic circumstances of the mid twentieth century and thus, arguably, may not have reflected the reality of mid nineteenth century Leicester. Even so I did personally feel that Royle's scheme could have been a useful, if not ideal, vehicle for analysing social class in the Weberian sense and the main reason for placing it in abeyance was due to the practical consideration that it would have involved too much sub-division of the electorate (particularly when conducted on an occupational

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8. *Census Guide*, pp19–26.

basis) and would thereby render a statistical analysis unreliable. Certainly some of Royle's classes would have comprised very few voters once segregation by occupation had been carried out. In the end the social class analysis presented in this chapter was based only upon a simple division between employers (including employers of domestic servants) and non-employers: i.e. upon the not unreasonable assumption that employers must, on balance, have ranked higher within the contemporary socio-economic spectrum than their non-employer counterparts, at least within the same occupational grouping. Nevertheless the 'household size' information was fully recorded and could be referred to in any future analysis of the data.

The far right-hand column of the sheets provided a space for rateable value ('R.V.'). It would seemingly have been legitimate to use the rateable value of the voter's dwelling as an indication of his relative socio-economic standing, either by itself or in conjunction with census evidence. Certainly ratebooks have been used in determining aspects of electoral behaviour (eg. Davis, 1972, p173), and it is not unknown for the pollbooks themselves to record rateable values alongside their voting lists (eg. the Newry (County Down) pollbook of 1868<sup>9</sup>). However a survey of the Leicester ratebooks did not suggest this pathway to be a viable one. In the less prestigious districts of the borough rateable values tended to be recorded on a block basis and might therefore have been misleading. Moreover information regarding many districts is not extant, so this approach was discounted.

Finally, data for the remaining column on the sheets, 'age', was obtained directly from the census and written down towards the left-hand side of the column, in order to leave room for the adjustment in age to coincide with the

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9. See O.U. Course, D301, Unit 8, Appendix.

data of the election. This adjustment was made on a year basis: i.e. an elector who was recorded as being 70 years of age in the 1851 census was taken to be 66 at the time of the 1847 election. The adjusted age was then recorded in red ink alongside the census age. A comment concerning the reliability of census ages appears later in the chapter.

For analytical purposes there is an assumption that the information yielded by the census returns is correct. But a distinctly possible source of error arises in presuming that occupation and employer/non-employer status of the individual elector at the time of the census was essentially the same at the time of the election. Although this may have often been the case, it is likely that a goodly number of electors' occupational statuses would have changed during the interim period. Certainly, changes can be observed among individuals from one census to the next – some becoming employers, others relinquishing employer status, whilst definite changes of occupation also featured. Therefore although the intervals between election and census are always shorter than the ten-year span between the two censuses some changes must have occurred, and thus in cases where the pollbook occupational description differs from that of the census, the former may, after all, have been correct.

Considerable numbers of voters were linked by the method described in this chapter, but as expected there was a broad pattern of less success when the time-span between election and census was relatively large. The actual degree of success of the linkage programme is illustrated in Appendix Two.

(ii) a. *Town Residents*

Throughout the period there is a clear tendency for the town residents to give disproportionately high levels of electoral support for the ultra-radical candidates vis-a-vis those electors who resided beyond the town boundaries. This is amply illustrated in Table 110 which indicates the numbers of votes involved, the percentages of radical support, and the  $\phi$  values which express the correlation levels between the incidence of town residence and radical voting in statistical terms<sup>11</sup>. Illustration 1a graphically demonstrates the phenomenon. As no census linkage was necessary to gather this particular set of data the entire electorate was used in the calculation.

There are two points to be made concerning the pattern illustrated in 1a. Firstly it demonstrates the existence of a fairly high correlation between town dwelling and radical support throughout the period. Secondly it shows that the correlation is strongest in 1852, the year of the radicals' greatest triumph, and weakest in 1861 when they lost much ground. Therefore the outvoters must have been relatively more stable in their electoral choice throughout the five elections.

b. *Occupational Grouping*

To produce a useful analysis regarding occupation, certain occupations were selected from the linked electorate and arranged into seven credible groupings, a full list of which is presented in Appendix Four. Admittedly these groupings may contain an element of arbitrariness in their make-up, but it was important to provide individual groupings of sufficient electoral size to enable reliable analyses to be carried out.

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10. See 'Lists of Tables and Illustrations'.  
 11. See Appendix 3.



Combined these seven groupings comprise at least 70% of the linked electorate in each election. The voting behaviour of the groupings is summarized in Table Two.

In Table Two, the 'N' values refer to the total number of votes cast by each group in each election. Under these are the percentages of those 'N' values given to the ultra-radical candidates. Glancing across the rows it is apparent that considerable fluctuation in these percentiles occurs from election to election. But although to some extent this reflects the changing fortunes of the two contending political groups, it is also greatly influenced by the varying sets of candidates from one election to another. In 1847 all electors could vote for up to two of the three candidates – two ultra-radical and one moderate. Inevitably many, although by no means all, of those who voted moderate chose not to use their other vote. Conversely there was a tendency for those voting radical to vote for both radical candidates. This explains why (with the notable exceptions of the drink trade in 1857(a), 1857(b) and 1859) the percentiles all give their highest values in that year. For the 1861 election, being a by-election, voters each had a single vote to give to one of the three candidates, of whom only one represented the radical camp: hence the relatively low percentiles. In fact, of the five elections only the 1852 (when two radicals faced two moderates in a two votes per elector contest, wherein, unlike in 1859, cross-voting and plumper voting was minimal) and the 1861 come close to reflecting the proportions of radical versus moderate support in terms of actual electors rather than just in terms of votes cast.

Much more important for the analysis are the variations down the columns, and beneath each percentile appears a  $\phi$  value expressing the relative radical support for each grouping compared to that given by all the remainder of the linked electorate (whether included in the other six groupings or not) for each election. For example in 1847 the hosiery trades gives a  $\phi$  value of +0.21: if one wished to know the correlation between *non*-hosiery and radical voting, one simply changes the sign: i.e. to -0.21. Likewise the correlation between Hosiery and moderate voting would be -0.21, and that between *non*-hosiery and moderate voting +0.21. The values of  $\phi$  for each occupational grouping over the five elections are graphically illustrated in 2a and 2b. In this case the 1857 (a) and 1857 (b) results are combined via a simple average of the two  $\phi$  values for each grouping.

The patterns illustrated in 2a and 2b are largely self-evident. There is wide disproportion in the relative support for ultra-radical candidates between the groupings. The hosiery trade is clearly the most radical, and the clerical/professional grouping the least. Vincent's observation, that the drink trade rebelled against the temperance-supporting, moderate Liberal candidate in 1857 and 1859, shows up well by the relative upsurge in radical voting by that grouping in those elections<sup>12</sup>.

But the question arises as to the extent to which these groupings are representative of the electorate as a whole. The dotted graph line in Illustration 2a connects a value of  $\phi$  for all votes cast by electors comprising the seven groups: i.e. by initially detaching the votes from the occupational groupings and thereby indicating their relative

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12. Vincent (1976), p97.

radicalism vis-a-vis the smaller portion of the electorate which was not incorporated into them. On the basis of the outcome the majority group were not representative of the linked electorate as a whole in terms of votes cast. For example in 1852 the remaining electorate would have yielded a  $\phi$  value of  $-0.13$ , identical in fact to that yielded by the clerical and professional group. This was perhaps to be expected since the rural (and thus relatively anti-radical) farmers would have formed an important section of the remaining electorate. But the relatively high  $\phi$  values, even in relation to the seven groupings, are very much due to the influence of the hosiery trade electorate: as Table Two indicates the voting strength of that occupational grouping was by far the largest. This, coupled with the fact that the trade was (except for the drink trade anomaly in 1857-9) by far the most radical grouping, was bound to lead to elevated mean  $\phi$  values. To some extent the relative decline in the hosiery trade's radicalism by 1861 explains the mean  $\phi$ 's dip into the negative region, although from 1859 to 1861 the drink, food, building and other textiles also move in the same direction. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of electoral behaviour in 1861 hinges on the fact that the excluded votes would yield a significantly high  $\phi$  value: i.e.  $+0.10$ . The reason for this at first seems hard to fathom, but as Table One indicated the outvoters tended to be more stable than their town counterparts. Thus the excluded votes, comprising a goodly number of rural farmers, would appear to be becoming relatively more radical in an election when the town vote swung against radicalism.

However if, instead of aggregating the votes among the occupational groupings, a simple mean of the seven  $\phi$  values in each election is calculated (as shown towards the foot of Table Two), and thereby each of the seven occupation groupings are accorded parity of weighting, the combination of the groupings is then considerably more representative of the linked electorate as a whole. This is graphically illustrated in 2b by the dotted line. The groups are then seen as only marginally more radical ( $\phi = +0.01$ ) until 1861 when their mean  $\phi$  value drops to  $-0.02$ .

But the overriding conclusion at this stage is that occupation was an important determinant of electoral behaviour in the locality during the period under study. Nevertheless, whilst the mean  $\phi$  values and the alternative ways of calculating them may be only of academic interest within the context of voting and occupation, they do become considerably more important when analysing the relationship between social class and electoral behaviour.

c. **Social Class**

After careful consideration, it seemed that a most convenient method of dividing the electorate along the lines of social stratification was simply to adjudge all voters whom the censuses recorded to be employers as 'high' social class. No distinction was made here regarding the nature of their employees: i.e. work hands, apprentices, domestic servants or even a single errand boy. The only exception for an employer to be excluded from the 'high' group was where his employee was a close relative. Conversely all non-employers were deemed 'low' social

class. At least during the early stages of this analysis no attempt was made to detach these two groups from the seven occupational groupings considered in the previous section. One advantage of this particular single line of demarcation is that it puts sufficient numbers of votes into each of the two categories, within each occupational grouping, to make a statistical analysis credible. Data assembled from this analysis is set out in Table Three.

In Table Three, for either class in all seven occupational groupings, for all five elections, ultra-radical support percentiles are indicated. The 'N' values bracketed indicate the total number of votes (radical plus moderate) upon which each percentile was determined. But of greater statistical significance are the  $\phi$  values which appear immediately below each pair of percentiles. Each  $\phi$  value represents the relative ultra-radical support from the low class vis-a-vis that from the high class within that specific occupational grouping for each election. In this table therefore each  $\phi$  value is in no way influenced by any variable outside the box into which it is placed. For simplicity a mean value of  $\phi$  is indicated for the twin 1857 (a) and 1857 (b) sets of data. The  $\phi$  value analysis is graphically illustrated in 3a, 3b and 3c.

In these illustrations, despite a rather strong element of oscillation from one election to the next, a generalized trend towards a stronger positive correlation between the low social class sections of the occupational groupings and radical voting seems clearly apparent. In 1847 four of the seven groupings yield a negative correlation: by 1861 only the shoe trade remains negative, and even then considerably less

so. As in Illustrations 2a and 2b attempts have been made to clarify this trend and the outcome is graphically illustrated in 3d.

Similar to the dotted line in 2a, the dotted line in 3d connects the overall  $\phi$  value for each election: i.e. by detaching the two social classes and their respective electoral support from the occupational groupings and determining an overall  $\phi$  value. The points (a) and (b) are the actual overall  $\phi$  values for 1857 (a) and 1857 (b) respectively – the line was drawn to pass through the median value of the two. But although the dotted line indicates an overall upward trend, credibility is marred by the oscillating pattern. However, this serves to demonstrate just how sensitive  $\phi$  is! A scrutiny of Table Three indicates that, not only do the 'N' values vary markedly in size from one occupational grouping to another, their relative proportions vary from election to election. These variants, coupled with the evidence apparent in Illustrations 3a, 3b and 3c, that all occupational groupings were yielding variable rates of movement towards a higher positive correlation between low social class and radical voting, were bound to produce oscillations from election to election when  $\phi$  is calculated in this way. The overall trend of the dotted line in 3d might have been more convincing if elections between 1847 and 1861 had occurred more frequently, but even then oscillations would still be a likely feature.

However, as the dotted line in Illustration 2b suggested, a simple mean of the occupational  $\phi$  values, on an election by election basis, indicated that the seven occupational groups combined on an equal weighting basis were closely representative, in terms of electoral support, of the

electorate as a whole i.e. it ran close to the line of zero correlation. If all linked voters had been included in the mean  $\phi$  value (whichever of the two alternative ways the latter was measured) of the occupational sets of data the result was bound to be zero for each election, because it would, in essence, be a measure of the disproportionate level of radical support among the Leicester electorate vis-a-vis the same! Moreover this method tended to dampen the sensitivity of  $\phi$  by annulling the variable proportions of the 'N' values. This principle was applied to the social class data by calculating a simple average of the seven  $\phi$  values and the outcome is both tabulated at the foot of Table Three and graphically illustrated by the continuous line in 3d. This graph line indicates a remarkably consistent movement towards a class-based voting pattern from 1847 to 1861. In 1847 the low social class was marginally less radical than the high: by 1861 the correlation coefficient between low class and radical voting stood at +0.16. To express this in plain man's English, if an electorate comprised 100 voters, each having one vote, of which 50 were high class and 50 low class, and if 25 of the high class voted radical and 25 moderate, the corresponding low class vote would need to be 33 radical/17 moderate to produce a  $\phi$  value of +0.16. In short if the high class voted radical:moderate in the ratio 1:1 the low class radical:moderate ratio would be almost 2:1.

Furthermore it does not necessarily follow that the demarcation line between the two classes has shown the disproportionate voting pattern to its fullest extent. It may be that too many individuals were awarded high class status. Employing an errand boy or the odd apprentice may

well not have been a hallmark of relative socio-economic superiority. Thus a higher set of employment requirements to determine the demarcation line might have produced significantly higher  $\phi$  values. But without further scrutiny of the data this is only speculation.

However as the continuous graph line in Illustration 3d does involve amalgamation of the occupational groupings there is a possible objection that this involves the presumption that the lower classes of each grouping shared a common position in terms of social stratum: i.e. that they did form a class in the Weberian sense. Certainly, at least in the extreme cases, this is unlikely because many numbering among the low class clerical/professional grouping were the sons of professional men who had not left home and therefore had no servants of their own. In fact virtually that entire grouping would have been literate and numerate. The same could not be said for the hosiery trade with its ranks of poor framework knitters living on the poverty line and often owing their enfranchisement to their freemen status.

But on the other hand, if we assume that the occupational groupings themselves represented the real social divisions of mid-nineteenth century Leicester, it is not unreasonable to assume that each grouping, and indeed the specific occupations within them, comprised the relatively more affluent, who were thus largely satisfied with the socio-political status quo, and the 'have nots' who were consequently more inclined to support radicalism in the hope that it could somehow be to their advantage. This sub-division within all occupational groups might conceivably become more acute as the general economic climate



improves, as it certainly did, steadily, between 1847 and 1861. As relative affluence developed individuals became less disposed towards being subject to the confines of their occupational group with its traditional pattern of voting behaviour. Such a hypothesis does appear to be born out in the tables and illustrations.

There is another piece of the analysis of social class voting to consider. There is little doubt that there was a considerable socio-economic gap between low class hosiery voters and high class clerical/professional voters. If any section of the electorate justified the 'working-class' label it was the low-class hosiery workers. The high class clerical/professional group, on the other hand, would have been the upper middle class of their day. Therefore these two isolated groups have been compared regarding their voting preferences. The outcome is indicated in Table Four.

The upper rows in the table indicate the correlation between radical voting in the low class hosiery trade vis-a-vis the same in the high class clerical/professional group. Although here  $\phi$  does not increase with time, its values for the five elections are impressively high. Indeed the peak value of +0.49 (1852) is akin to the correlation between the working class and support for the Labour party in the mid 1960s!<sup>13</sup> However, these values do disregard the 'occupational factor' which has already been demonstrated important: therefore it seemed appropriate to also determine the disproportion in radical support among the high class hosiery group vis-a-vis the high class clerical/professional group. The outcome is also illustrated in Table Four. Very high correlations

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13. Butler and Stokes, pp39-43.

emerge in 1847 and 1852 but decline sharply after 1852. Although it might well not be sound statistical practise the two sets of values have been subtracted to give a set of values based entirely on social class difference. Now we see the disproportionation increasing from 1847 to 1859 although it falls again in 1861.

Even so these 'differences in  $\phi$ ' may to some extent underestimate the real levels of disproportionation in radical support between electors markedly different regarding their socio-economic standing, because, even though the high class hosiery group would have contained a goodly number of well-to-do persons, there is no reason to suppose that that section of the electorate as a whole was on the same level, in socio-economic terms, with those comprising the high class clerical/professional group. Again there would be a need to consider elevating the set of criteria upon which the demarcation line between low and high class has been based in the analysis.

There remains one aspect of social class voting to consider. Although the analyses presented in this chapter are based essentially on the ultra-radical/moderate divide (which entailed amalgamating the moderate Liberal and Conservative votes – a seemingly wise practice in view of the clarity of the divide) the research would be the poorer if no focus was given to the other political divisions upon which electoral choices could have been made. Radical/moderate divisions do not offer evidence of voting patterns along the traditional two-party lines, except perhaps in the case of the 1847 election. Therefore a further analysis of data has been conducted concentrating on the 1859 and

1861 elections, both of which included radical, moderate Liberal and Conservative candidates. The outcome is set out in Table Five.

The mean  $\phi$  values at the foot of Table Five are quite interesting. A major finding is that in both 1859 and 1861 the biggest difference in class support is between the radical Liberal and moderate Liberal candidates. This is especially notable in 1861 where the correlation between low social class and radical voting (vis-a-vis moderate Liberal voting) yields an impressive  $\phi$  value of +0.21 – significantly higher than the 1861 peak value of +0.16 when moderate support was adjudged to include the Conservative vote (see Illustration 3d).

This brings low class support for the Conservatives into the spotlight. Although as Table Five indicates the low class, on balance, preferred the radicals to the Conservatives by the significant  $\phi$  margins of +0.10 and +0.13 in 1859 and 1861 respectively, this section of the electorate was evidently less antipathetic towards the Conservative candidate, Heygate, than towards his moderate Liberal counterpart, Harris. The mean  $\phi$  values for the correlation between low social class and moderate Liberal support (vis-a-vis Conservative support), when the ultra-radical vote is set aside, also highlights this point. Admittedly it is barely existent in 1859, but is somewhat significant in 1861 where a  $\phi$  value of -0.06 emerges. Moreover there is, arguably, some justification for placing greater reliance on the 1861 data than for that of 1859. 1861 was a by-election in which each elector had a single vote, therefore no opportunity for plumper-voting or cross-voting existed; the electors were faced with a simple choice between three candidates.

The overall balance, as indicated by the mean  $\phi$  values at the foot of the left-hand columns of the 1859 and 1861 sets of data in Table Five, yields a disproportionately high level of Liberal voting from the low social class, although less markedly so in 1861. But this was entirely due to the presence of ultra-radicals candidates within the Liberal camp. Remove the ultra-radicals and the Liberals have a disproportionately low appeal to the low social class, especially in 1861.

All these findings provoke considerable thought regarding the social class electoral patterns in Leicester and elsewhere in the period after 1861, and the matter is returned to in Chapter Six.

d. *Political Generation*

All electors, where their individual age was discernible in the census schedules, were included in determining the average (mean) age of the voters supporting each of the candidates in all five elections. Where an elector cast two votes his age became included in the calculation for two candidates. The results are illustrated in Table Six. The ultra-radical candidates are arranged in the upper section of the table and are underlined in red: the lower section comprises the moderate Conservatives (underlined in blue) and moderate Liberals (underlined in green).

Table Six indicates a clear pattern. The mean age of the individuals casting a vote for any of the candidates in the five elections is always lower in the case of the radicals. This age difference varies from 0.22

years (in the 1847 case of Walmesley versus Parker) to 2.59 years (in the 1861 case of Harris versus Taylor).

But there are three additional points to consider concerning the evidence offered in Table Six. It is noticeable that in the two elections contested by John Biggs the mean age of his supporters was higher than that of the other radical candidates: i.e. Walmesley in 1857 and Noble in 1859. It may well have been that Biggs's standing and influence in the town led to his receipt of support from the relatively older voters, despite his radical politics – support which they were not prepared to give to the less influential candidates of an identical political hue.

The second point to note is that the narrowest margin (0.22 years) across the radical/moderate divide – that between Walmesley and Parker in 1847 – is the narrowest by far. True the Biggs/Harris gap is only 0.35 years in 1857 (a), but even that becomes 1.02 years in the 1857 (b) data. In fact the 1847 difference might be insignificant considering the analysis hinges upon census ages recorded in years only, although the large number of individuals involved greatly reduce, statistically, the individual precise-age error, and in any case a combination of the two radical candidates produces a median age of 46.12 years which does increase the margin to 0.29 years – about 3½ months. But the narrow margin of the 1847 result may in itself be a pointer towards an explanation of the apparent generational phenomenon suggested in Table Six. Parker was a moderate Conservative. So too was Heygate, and it can be observed that the

latter's support, in terms of average age, is noticeably younger than that of the moderate Liberal, Harris: i.e. 0.34 years in 1859 and 0.69 years in 1861. If Biggs is discounted, for the reason given above, the biggest age differences always occur across the ultra-radical Liberal/moderate Liberal divide: eg. even the smallest margin (0.82 years) between Walmesley and Harris in 1857 (a) becomes 2.24 years in 1857 (b), while the largest disparity (2.60 years) is that between Harris and Taylor in 1861. Thus one could conclude at this stage in the analysis that the on-going conflict between the two wings of the local Liberal party to some extent reflected a generational conflict: i.e. the younger Liberal voters were giving a disproportionately high level of support to radical candidates.

But there is a third point about the data in Table Six. Although there is no difference in rank order of ages supporting the three candidates between 1857 (a) and 1857 (b), there are marked differences in the mean ages between the two sets of data. This in itself does not suggest direct inaccuracy for two reasons. Firstly the two sets of mean ages by no means relate to all the same individuals. A goodly proportion of the 1857 electors linked to the 1851 census do not reappear in the 1861 census, and vice-versa. Secondly the certain element of crudity involved in adding six years to the 1851 set and subtracting four from the 1861 census ages should not have produced the disparity as two candidate's values fall from (a) to (b) whilst the third rises. But it is true to admit that among those 1857 electors who were linked to both censuses it is not uncommon to find individuals only eight or nine years older than they were a decade earlier.

Likewise others appeared to be eleven or twelve years older by 1861. However, in the end the researcher must accept the overall truthfulness of census information and in this case the assumption is that errors in precise age (and this may well be due to many individuals being unsure themselves) tend to average out, and therefore data based upon large numbers of individuals can be deemed reliable. But since the 1861 census data (1857 (b)) linked 26.6% more votes than the 1851 census data (1857 (a)), the former data should be statistically more reliable: i.e. the inevitable error due to sampling decreases with the proportional size of the sample. Therefore as the initial results illustrated in Table Six clearly merited deeper analysis, and as this involved considerable further sifting of data, it was thought appropriate at this stage to exclude the 1857 (a) data from further analysis: i.e. all analyses presented from this point on for the 1857 election relate to that portion of the electorate which was successfully linked to the 1861 census.

The next stage entailed determining the relative support given to each candidate in the five elections in terms of ten-year cohorts. 'Cohort' in this context refers to the age-group of individual votes cast at the time of the election, and does not refer to groups who entered the electorate at the same time. The results are set out in Table Seven and depicted graphically in Illustrations Seven (a-e).

These results reinforce the evidence of an age factor in electoral choice. As indicated in the original mean age calculations, the younger voters did give a disproportionate high level of support to the ultra-

radical candidates especially when Biggs and the moderate Conservatives are discounted. On balance the graphs suggest that the proportional change in allegiance hinges, roughly, around the age of fifty: i.e. there is no apparent proportional decline in radical support before mid-life. Therefore use has again been made of the correlation coefficient to obtain evidence of the relationship between the under fifty-ones and radical voting. The statistics appear in Table Eight. This table is derived from the 'N' values listed in Table Seven.

As expected a positive  $\phi$  value occurs in all elections. The elevated values bracketed in the row beneath are the values of  $\phi$  when Biggs and Heygate are eliminated from the calculation.

It would be tempting at this stage to offer an explanation for this undeniable age factor in electoral choice, either in terms of a general tendency for younger human beings to be more radical than their older contemporaries or in terms of the different outlook of the older electors born of their experiences of the preceding decades. But, as previous sections of this chapter have indicated, electoral choice was found to be considerably influenced by urban/rural residence, occupational grouping and social class – all of which at times produced greater disproportionation of radical support than is indicated by age. Therefore if any of those three divisions in the electorate comprised electors substantially different from the general distribution of age-groups within the linked electorate as a whole, it might well account for the positive correlation between the younger voters and radical support in the five elections.



In Table Nine it can be observed that in the 1852 election the outvoters formed a smaller (10.3%) proportion of younger voters within the electorate as a whole than older (13.4%) voters within the electorate as a whole. But to some extent its effect is offset by a somewhat stronger radicalism among the outvoter young vis-à-vis the young electorate as a whole: i.e. the young outvoters give a  $\phi$  value of +0.07 against +0.06 for the young electorate as a whole. The key figure in Table Nine is the  $\phi$  value of +0.05 when the Leicester borough votes are considered in isolation. The positive correlation between the younger voters and radical supported remains, albeit reduced. Even so, on the basis of the 1852 analysis, this reduction would have been sufficient to eliminate the 1847  $\phi$  value of +0.01.

Table 10 indicates that the younger section of the relatively radical hosiery trade, when matched with the same age range among the relatively non-radical clerical/professional grouping, is marginally larger in terms of votes cast than when a similar matching is made with the older voters: i.e. 70.0% against 68.6%.

The Table 11 data highlights the age disproportion of social class within the confines of occupational grouping. In the case of the hosiery trade the older age range contains a markedly greater proportion of low class voters than in the younger age range within the same trade. In the clerical/professional case the older group contains relatively fewer low class voters: i.e. 38.9% against 44.8% for their more youthful counterparts.

These snippets of data presented in Tables 10 and 11 serve to emphasize that it could well be folly to draw any conclusions from the results appearing in Table Seven without further analysis in which rigid controls for occupational grouping and social class are applied. This policy was used in the assembling of the data set out in Table 12.

Because of the intrinsic unreliability of drawing statistical evidence from analyses based upon smallish numbers of votes, which this further sub-division of the electorate inevitably entailed, only the four largest of the original seven occupational groupings feature in Table 12. Even so care should be taken not to read too much into the individual  $\phi$  values on account of the smallness of the vote involved in some of the calculations. Nevertheless certain patterns may be of significance. The younger members of the high class clerical/professional group, after demonstrating marked disproportionately high radical support vis-à-vis their elders in 1847 and 1852, swung sharply against it in 1857, 1859 and 1861. The younger high class food trade voters behaved in exactly the opposite fashion. Young low class hosiers show a slight relative inclination towards radicalism after 1847, whereas their high class counterparts, having been relatively strongly radical compared to their elders in 1847, turned very sharply against radicalism in 1857.

Much more important and reliable are the overall mean  $\phi$  values appearing at the foot of Table 12. These values are all lower than those set out at the bottom of Table Eight, although a distinct similarity exists between the two sets of data. On the one hand this difference

may well indicate heterogeneity across the age spectrum regarding occupation and/or social class, but on the other hand the four occupational groupings which comprise Table 12 together only account for about half the total linked electorate; i.e. there is an assumption that the overall generational pattern of the four groupings is representative of the electorate as a whole.

One important feature emerges in the results: the disproportionation tends to increase when the votes cast for Biggs and Heygate are discounted. This is especially so in 1861. The revised  $\phi$  value relates to the votes obtained by the radical Liberal, Taylor, and the moderate Liberal, Harris, in a one-vote per elector by-election contest in which a Conservative, Heygate, also participated. But this outcome begs the question: 'What happens when the vote distribution is analysed on a party basis?' The answer is provided in Table 13. In 1861 we are back to precisely the fractionally negative correlation evident in 1847 when the election was conducted on Liberal/Conservative party lines! The generational feature therefore, like the social class feature, appears to be closely linked to the on-going cleavage within the local Liberal party. These findings are discussed in greater depth in Chapter Six.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Findings in the Research – The Religious Dimension*

The outcome of the analyses presented in Chapter Five reveals that, to a greater or a lesser extent, residence, occupation, social class and age were all influential factors in electoral choice during the five Leicester parliamentary elections held between 1847 and 1861.

Of particular significance was the stronger radicalism of the borough dwellers compared with their outvoter counterparts residing within a seven mile radius of the town. Even a summary inspection of the pollbooks reveals that given a Conservative candidate the outvoters gave him considerable electoral support. When no Conservative stood (as in 1852 and 1857) they would turn to the Liberal moderates, although whether this was more from desire to keep the radicals out than a demonstration of affinity towards Wilde, Palmer and Harris is open to question. An important point is that the non-radical character of the rural areas is very much in evidence in modern times, throughout much of Britain. Leicestershire itself is a prime example. In the general election of 1987 the city returned all three Labour candidates whilst the surrounding constituencies produced very substantial Conservative majorities.

Occupational preference was likewise of significance. The hosiery trade in particular tended towards radicalism: the clerical and professional voters were non-radically inclined. Again, there is the suggestion of a parallel with the mid twentieth century, although there may well be a crucial difference. Occupation during recent decades has been categorized more in terms of occupational status than trade: i.e. occupation is classified as higher managerial, lower managerial, supervisory non-manual, lower

non-manual, skilled manual or unskilled manual. These types of division are akin to social class strata and are frequently perceived as such both by modern researchers and by individual voters when giving a self-assessment of their own social standing<sup>1</sup>. But most of those mid nineteenth century occupational groupings which are analysed in Chapter Five would only represent vertical divisions with the socio-economic order of the period: i.e. there seems no justification in attempting to represent the drink, boot and shoe, building, food and textile trades as forming horizontal socio-economic divisions of Leicester. In this respect the findings simply reflect the conclusion that Nossiter drew from his pollbook analysis – that the various occupational groups gave disproportionate electoral support for candidates.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless it is fair to assume that those electors numbered among the clerical and professional grouping were, on balance, of a higher social standing than the others, while the hosiery grouping was, on balance, lower than the rest and certainly lower than the clerical and professional sector. In which case the results of the analysis point to a salient social class factor in electoral choice throughout the period under study.

But even when no social stratification based on specific occupational grouping is assumed – when social class is determined by the criterion of employer status (high) and non-employer status (low), albeit in a scheme which gave parity of electoral weighting to the seven individual occupational groupings – the analysis indicated a steady growth in the phenomenon of class-based voting to a highly significant dimension by the end of the fourteen year period. Indeed this is probably the most important discovery in the research and indicates that the social class factor was more, or at least was becoming more, salient in electoral choice than Vincent was prepared to acknowledge<sup>3</sup>.

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1. *Butler and Stokes, pp69–70.* 2. *Nossiter in 'Drake', p254.* 3. *See Ch. 2, pp20–25.*

However a drawback arises in attempting to equate the evidently marked level of class-based voting in Leicester during the 1850s and early 1860s with the general existence of the phenomenon by the third decade of the twentieth century, to which several researchers: eg. P. F. Clarke, H. Pelling, N. Blewett, P. Thompson and J. Cornford: have read back into the late nineteenth century – some as far back as 1867<sup>4</sup>. As the analysis reveals the level of social-class voting was considerably enhanced by the fratricidal split within the local Liberal party. The low class gave disproportionately high support to the ultra-radical faction, the high class gave disproportionately high support to the moderates. And though the overall pattern indicated a low class preference for the Liberals in sum total, vis-a-vis the Conservatives, when the latter re-entered the local electoral stage in 1859 and 1861 this disparity was due to the formidable presence of the radical candidates within the framework of the Liberal party<sup>5</sup>.

It is therefore somewhat risky to predict what social class pattern the election results after 1861 would have produced, since it is well known that following the 1861 by-election debacle the Liberals felt obliged to heal their differences and agree to share the representation of the borough: i.e. one candidate to be ultra-radical, the other to be moderate. This policy proved successful both in terms of party unity and electoral rewards. The party continuously shared the representation at Westminster until election of 1900. Moreover the 1867 Reform Act would have shifted the class balance of the electorate in favour of the low social class, and therefore the politics of the borough would have henceforth operated under a different set of circumstances than those prevailing during the period under study. Even so it seems feasible to envisage the local Liberal party drawing disproportionately high support among the swelled echelons of low class voters. The unified Liberals continued to include a very influential left wing, as evident in the personage of P. A. Taylor, who replaced John

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4. See Ch.2, pp13–14.

5. See Ch.5, pp126–9.

Biggs as M. P. in 1862 and continued to represent Leicester until towards the close of the century. There is no evidence to suggest that local Conservatism could offer anything approaching Taylor's brand of radicalism. It therefore seems unlikely that many low class radical voters would have rejected the re-unified Liberal party on the grounds that the radical politicians had now allied themselves to what their electoral supporters had long been accustomed to perceive as a Whiggish faction. Even the disgruntled would have shown their protest merely by plumping for the ultra-radical candidate. The newly enfranchised electors would surely have supported the vehicle which incorporated that group which had for nearly twenty years campaigned to give them what they had now attained, and that vehicle was the Liberal party. Rather it seems more likely that erstwhile moderate Liberal voters would have spurned the party in significant numbers. These, in contrast to the radical voters, did have an alternative party to turn to which was untainted by the extreme radicalism which characterized one half of the local Liberal party and which, as evident in Chapter Four, was barely distinguishable in its policies from the Harris-led moderate Liberals<sup>6</sup>. Even if they remained loyal to Harris (who incidentally came to share the representation of the borough with Taylor from 1865) there is the likelihood of their second votes going to a Conservative candidate. If these predictions did in fact become reality they would strongly reinforce Pulzer's claim of a marked positive correlation between Liberalism and lower social status since 1867<sup>7</sup> – well before the 1886 split which many other revisionist historians believe to have been crucial.

But whilst such a hypothesis on the local voting pattern of a period later than that under study is inevitably conjectural the analyses of social class influences from 1847 to 1861 do indicate certain important features. The on-going Liberal split after 1847 was clearly linked with an electoral pattern characterized by a growing tendency for ultra-radical candidates to draw disproportionately high support from those voters

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6. See Ch.4, pp92–100.

7. See Ch.2,p13.

who were not employers of any kind. This may point to the phenomenon of rationality in electoral choice: i.e. the Utilitarian argument that the voter behaved as an individual, in an essentially rational manner – that he understood the workings of the political system and had a complete grasp of the issues placed before him by the various candidates. Thus the more affluent voter would have had less inclination to vote for a radical reform of a system which had placed him in a relatively high socio-economic position. However, political scientists have long since found that large proportions of electorates know precious little about the workings of the political systems and the issues put before them. Certainly Cox expressed such an opinion regarding British voters of the late nineteenth century<sup>8</sup>. Moreover Utilitarian arguments underplayed the social nature of man. It is now a commonplace that man is a social animal and that the social groups to which he belongs largely determine his attitudes. As three leading American political scientists put it nearly fifty years ago, 'A person thinks politically as he is socially. Social characteristics determine political preference'<sup>9</sup>. In fact there are grounds for claiming that the majority of those who voted for either side formed distinct social entities, regardless of their employer/non-employer status. An inspection of the pollbooks leaves little doubt that radical support tended to be considerably stronger in those wards which were undeniably the poor parts of town, whilst the least radical districts comprised the central shopping area, the prestigious London Road area and (though partly for reasons other than social class) the outlying villages. Although the extent of 'party' organisation in the different wards should not be overlooked, and in any case this would have tended to mirror the existing political hue of each ward, the voting pattern of mid nineteenth century Leicester regarding its wards closely resembles the pattern of a hundred years later. In the 1850s the poorer wards preferred the radicals (radical Liberal) and the wealthier wards the non-radical (moderate Liberal/Conservative): in the 1950s the poorer wards preferred the radicals (Labour) and the wealthier wards the non-

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8. Cox, p8.

9. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, p27.



radical (Conservative). With the exception of the Conservatives the parties had changed, but the social class factor in electoral choice had apparently remained.

However, Leicester was undoubtedly exceptional in this respect; it harboured a more forceful radicalism than elsewhere. As A. T. Patterson notes, it was the numbers and predominance of the radicals which made the one all important difference between Leicester and other parts of the country<sup>10</sup>. But, as discussed at length in Chapter Three, the forces which generated this local radicalism owed little to a class struggle in the Weberian sense of the term (i.e. the poor versus the rich). Rather it was largely the outcome of the struggle of nonconformity to overcome its disabilities in the face of the opposition of the Established Church<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless once the pressing needs of nonconformity had been attained, once they had succeeded in scrapping the local Church rates, the more advanced radicals, undoubtedly impressed by the apparent local sympathies for Chartism, proceeded to turn their attention to franchise reform, whilst the more moderate radicals began to think things were moving too far, too fast. The former quickly discovered they were on fertile ground. The large local hosiery trade had undergone a series of depressions, the threat of the workhouse loomed large, and the electorate incorporated large numbers from the low social class. Therefore by the early 1850s Leicester enjoyed the right set of circumstances for the development of class-based voting. It had what was in effect a two-party system offering decisively different policies towards the contemporary political issues, especially franchise reform. The options were clear and, for a time, completely devoid of traditional party alignments: i.e. during the split the ultra-radicals and the moderates were both claiming to represent the true Liberal party. Admittedly the relative numerical strength of the low social class vis-a-vis elsewhere is largely assumed and is not statistically confirmed. Suffice to say that the 1857 pollbook records that 24.75% of the borough electorate owned its electoral qualification solely

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10. Patterson, p343.

11. See Ch.3, pp44-46.

on the basis of resident freemen status. Furthermore these comprised only 11.20% of the St. Martin's ward electorate – consistently the least radical ward of the town – but reached 37.11% in the predominantly radical West St. Mary's ward. Thus a fair portion of the local electorate was seemingly below the £10 borough franchise limit, and yields further evidence of a positive association between low social class and radical voting. Electoral qualifications were not taken into consideration when establishing a demarcation line between low and high social class in the analyses presented in Chapter Five, primarily because it would have placed great reliance upon pollbook information alone, and in any case for only two of the five elections was this information recorded. Even so an inspection of the West St. Mary's ward electorate for the 1857 poll revealed a correlation between the incidence of freeman status and radical voting of +0.14 – higher in fact than the +0.10 low class/radical voting figure obtained for the same election using the entire census-linked electorate with an employer/non-employer line of demarcation<sup>12</sup>.

Yet Nossiter, in his study of the North-East, found the freeman voters non-radical and attributes this to the virtual non-participation of the labour aristocracy in electoral radicalism and the lack of working-class facilities. But there is little to suggest labour organisation played any role in Leicester's radicalism during the 1850s either. Moreover he reveals that the radicalism of the region was essentially a creation of the lower middle-class, the 'shopocracy', largely in response to the upper middle classes represented chiefly by the Whigs who (in the case of Newcastle) upon displacing the old Tory corporation in the 1830s, then became as self-satisfied and corrupt as their predecessors<sup>13</sup>. But whilst the research presented in this thesis has not delved into precisely who performed the party spadework, there appears to have been certain important differences between the two localities which may account for the contrasting voting patterns. As illustrated in Chapter Three there is no evidence that

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12. See Illustration 3d.

13. Nossiter, pp144–176.

the reformed Leicester corporation had fallen into the hands of a corrupt Whiggish clique. Indeed it became a springboard for radical reform<sup>14</sup>. The whole Leicester Liberal party, rooted as it was in nonconformity, stood to the left of Whiggism<sup>15</sup> and the radical/moderate divide was not significantly related, as far as is known, to social strata in terms of its organization. Certainly there was nothing petty bourgeois about the radical leadership of the 1850s and early 1860s: John Biggs was a very wealthy and influential hosier. Maybe this in itself goes a long way to explain it. During the two and a half decades after 1832 the Tyneside radicals were prone to the hostility of the governing Whigs and Tories, and certainly did not have access to the financial resources available to their opponents. In contemporary Leicester the Liberal-radicals were an integral part of the local authority and included such influential persons as the Congregationalist minister, E. T. Miall, and the Baptist, Rev. Mursell. The town Tories had virtually disappeared from the scene, while the disagreements regarding further radical proposals were a matter of degree, not kind. It was not a question of whether the Church rates should or should not be abolished, but rather a question of the pathway to achieve abolition. The only real opposition to Liberal-radicalism came, naturally enough, from the Established Church. And, as the two Liberal wings drew apart in the late 1840s, Biggs, having twice held office of mayor, shifted from his unaligned stance and embraced ultra-radicalism. Thus in Leicester during the period for which the voting analyses are presented in Chapter Five the radicals had acquired money, influence, power and respectability – all invaluable resources which, coupled with a political programme barely distinguishable from Chartism, clearly won the support of the enfranchised working class. In contrast the Tyneside radicals were not able to make a serious breakthrough until the 1860s.

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14. See Ch.3, pp41–43.

15. But of course 'Whiggism' is a debatable term: see Southgate, p76.

Regarding Conservative voting the Chapter Five data does indicate that, like the North-East, it was more representative of the whole social strata, in that it was somewhat less disproportionately weighted towards the high social class than the non-radical Liberals. Even so there is little concrete evidence to suggest that the party was making serious inroads among the low social class. Whilst a scrutiny of the election returns does point to some support among the lowest class (eg. it is not uncommon to find a town resident, described as a 'labourer', registering a Conservative vote) there seems no grounds for supposing the Conservatives could have benefited from a lowering of the franchise qualification. However, this conclusion, which runs contrary to what Disraeli was thinking at the time, is based purely on the pattern of voting on the part of the enfranchised. It merely assumes that the unqualified would have followed suit.

Of those electors who voted Conservative in 1859 about a third did not use their second vote in support of any of the other three Liberal candidates. Most of those who did voted, not surprisingly, for Harris. This feature was largely predictable and reflected the growing confidence of a local Conservative party which felt no need for an alliance with the Liberal moderates against the radicals<sup>16</sup>.

The influence of religious sectarianism on the shape of Leicester's politics is beyond question, and as Chapter Four illustrates religious issues appear to have been salient during the election campaigns between 1847 and 1861: the Maynooth Grant, the Roman ecclesiastical hierarchy, Popish developments within the Established Church, and the sabbatarian question all arose alongside the more perennial issues of Church rates and disestablishment<sup>17</sup>. But for reasons explained in Chapter Two the nature of religious data provides little opportunity to produce a statistical analysis based upon large numbers of individuals in order to determine the influence of religious affiliation on electoral choice<sup>18</sup>.

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16. See Ch.4, pp96-97.

17. *Ibid*, pp73-103.

18. See Ch.2, pp31-32.

Even so it is appreciated that the non-appearance of any data on the religious dimension would be tantamount to an assumption that it was of no consequence in the decision of the individual to support a particular candidate or party during a period when most historical writers are convinced of its importance. For this reason the voting preferences of the census-linked clergy were noted and the outcome set out in Table 14.

An examination of Table 14 reveals that in the 1847 election protestant nonconformity and Established Church are perfectly aligned on opposite sides of the political divide. All dissenting ministers were radical: all the Anglican clergy voted Conservative. There is nothing unexpected about this outcome, because whatever influence the developments of the preceding decades (or for that matter the preceding centuries) may have brought to bear, Parker, the Conservative candidate, was a loyal Anglican who staunchly opposed the demands for disestablishment expressed by Walmesley and Gardner, although Walmesley himself was nominally Anglican.

The 1852 clergy voting mirrors that of 1847 save that the Anglicans were evidently prepared to support the moderate Liberals in the absence of a Conservative candidate. Again this was to be expected since Wilde and Palmer were, like Parker, loyal Anglicans. But regarding the continued support of nonconformity for Walmesley and Gardner it offers firm evidence of a contemporarily strong connexion between radicalism and dissent. On the basis of the 1847 election it would be possible to argue that the dissenting ministers were merely voting as Liberals: in 1852 they had the choice between moderation and radicalism within the Liberal framework, and they opted for radicalism.

In 1857 the pattern is somewhat less clear-cut. Of the eight Anglican votes cast, seven were given to Harris and, given the views expressed by the three candidates on matters of religious concern, this outcome was predictable. Harris was an Anglican who opposed disestablishment: Biggs was a dissenter who, like Walmsley, advocated disestablishment. Admittedly one Anglican cast his second vote for Biggs but this may perhaps have been an anti-Walmsley gesture. Significantly neither church nor chapel gave any support to Walmsley. In the Church case this only reflected the earlier pattern, but his total loss of nonconformist support was surely due to his unorthodox Sabbath outlook. Even before the election took place the dissenters had pledged their support to Harris – a decision made easier for them by Harris's opposition to the principle of Church rates. It would not be easy on the evidence of the 1857 election, set against a background of the earlier elections, to perceive a sudden nonconformist shift away from political radicalism because they remained loyal to Biggs, given that except for the 'Sunday League' question there was in matters of political policy little to choose between Biggs and Walmsley. Nevertheless the giving of their second vote to Biggs may have been an outcome of his outstanding influence in the town, for, as pointed out in Chapter Four, Biggs was seldom subject to the forceful attacks levelled against his radical colleagues<sup>19</sup>.

The 1859 election saw the Anglicans supporting the Conservative, Heygate, although three continued to support Harris also. Their solitary vote for Dr. Noble is understandable as Noble was a loyal Anglican except that, like Harris, he opposed Church rates. The general tendency of the Anglican clergy to prefer, when given the opportunity, Conservatism tempered with lesser, yet significant, support for moderate Liberalism mirrors the general pattern among Conservative supporters in the 1859 election. For example, of the 1,239 pollbook-computed regular Conservative

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19. See Ch.4, p87.

supporters who chose Heygate, 34% were plumpers (none of them plumped for Harris), 54% paired with Harris and only 12% paired with one of the ultra-radical candidates<sup>20</sup>. But the election does suggest that the alignment between nonconformity and radicalism was breaking down. Whereas nonconformity's rejection of Walmesley in 1857 may well have been due to the Sabbath issue, their relative lack of support for Noble cannot be explained along the same lines. The only possible argument for their preference for Harris, other than as an indication of a trend towards their rejection of radical politics, is that Harris was a wealthy man and was therefore, like Biggs, influential. Noble on the other hand was merely a benevolent, local G. P.. Moreover two nonconformist votes went to Heygate, thereby reinforcing the evidence of a breakdown in the erstwhile radical/dissent alignment.

But it is in 1861 that the implication becomes almost inescapable. Only one vote out of the twelve cast by nonconformist ministers went to the ultra-radical candidate, Taylor. There are no grounds for arguing that specific religious issues influenced the outcome. Harris and Taylor held identical religious opinions; both opposed disestablishment and Church rates. In the 1852 election Wilde and Palmer suffered total rejection by the nonconformist ministers: in 1861 Harris almost swept the board. Yet the only significant difference in their policies was that Harris, unlike Wilde and Palmer, opposed the principle of Church rates, and there must be some doubt regarding the importance of that difference because the Church rates question had ceased to be a burning local issue since 1849 when the Liberals captured the one remaining Conservative-controlled vestry of St. Martin, and thereafter Church rates payments in Leicester were strictly on a voluntary basis<sup>21</sup>. Nevertheless it is reasonable to argue that although Taylor held no views likely to offend nonconformity he held no views likely to attract them either. In this respect he contrasts markedly

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20. See also this Chapter, p145. 21. See Ch.3, p45.

with his predecessors in 1852 who were able to offer disestablishment and Church rates abolition as carrots to nonconformist opinion.

There are several points which require comment concerning the information given in Table 14. Firstly the Roman Catholic priests' vote is consistently and solidly ultra-radical. This is entirely understandable since only the radical candidates tended to play down the often shrill chorus against Romanism in general and the Maynooth Grant in particular which characterised at least the earlier election campaigns during the period under study. Secondly it must be stressed that the nonconformist ministers whose voting preferences are recorded comprised the 'old dissent': i.e. no Methodist ministers appeared in the census-linked records. Thirdly there is a tacit assumption that the voting preferences of the clergy would have been reflected among the religious sects at large. It seems reasonable to suppose that this was in fact the case. Whether the religiously committed followed their respective ministers' leads or whether the ministers were being led by their congregations is surely irrelevant. It seems unlikely that ministerial electoral choice would have differed from congregation to any marked extent. Indeed there is much to indicate that the withdrawal of nonconformist ministerial support was a crucial factor in the electoral defeat of radical candidates – Walmesley was ousted in 1857 and Taylor came bottom of the poll in 1861. But the same cannot be said about 1859 when Harris was defeated whilst Noble achieved an, albeit narrow, victory. Thus it may be that the Roman Catholic priests were influenced by their largely Irish congregations: i.e. the priests' decisions owed much to the Irish ethnicity of their flocks (none of the priests bore Irish surnames) although electorally the impact would have been minimal. No doubt the 'Chronicle' and the 'Journal' had considered the latter point before mounting what was clearly an anti-Catholic platform designed to woo protestant voters in 1847 and 1852. Lastly there is the question of the reliability of the data. Certainly there



hangs a question mark over any attempt to draw quantitative analytical conclusions from a mere handful of votes. Therefore in terms of reliability the Table 14 data is not in the same league as Tables 1–13 and this accounts for its exclusion from Chapter Five.

But having made this point the Table 14 data does seem to point to an overall conclusion on the influence of religious affiliation during the period. Although the pattern, election by election, can be interpreted in terms of several interlinking factors: eg. money and influence, disestablishment, Church rates and sabbatarian outlook: and it would be foolish to deny that specific issues centring around specific candidates were of considerable importance, the overall trend is a weakening in the association of nonconformity and ultra-radicalism. At a grave risk of incurring disdain from historians schooled in the techniques of quantitative analysis the correlation coefficients between the incidence of nonconformist ministerial status and radical voting, vis-a-vis the Anglican clergy, have been measured. In 1847 and 1852 it was +1.0, in 1857 it had fallen to +0.41, 1859 to +0.34, and +0.21 in 1861. This represents a massive nonconformist swing against radicalism from 1852 to 1861 and more or less coincides with the progressive upswing in the social class cleavage along electoral lines presented graphically in Illustration 3d. Nevertheless religious affiliation was technically still more salient than social class in 1861: i.e.  $\phi$  (religion) = +0.21,  $\phi$  (social class) = +0.16. But in terms of the split in the Liberal party only, the reverse is the case: i.e.  $\phi$  (religion) = + 0.08,  $\phi$  (social class) = +0.21.

However as Tables Five and 14 reveal, on a Liberal versus Conservative basis the weakening of the alignment along religious lines was highly marginal (i.e. from +1.00 in 1847 to +0.92 in 1861) and whilst this is accompanied by a concurrent shift towards class-based voting (i.e. from -0.03 in 1847 to +0.03 in 1861) the overall

conclusion must be that religious affiliation remained the dominant element in electoral choice on a party basis. These findings are thus in agreement with virtually all historians, who stress the primacy of religion in the political life of the mid nineteenth century.

Regarding political generation a number of interesting features emerged from the analyses. Firstly it was found that given that the age spectrum did not comprise a homogeneous blend of occupational, social class and residential characteristics – all of which independently influenced electoral choice – care had to be taken before concluding that the observed general tendency of the younger section of voters to support radicalism to a disproportionately high extent was either the outcome of a natural tendency of youth and/or the outcome of political experiences shared by the young contrasting with other shared experiences among the older voters. Nevertheless when controls for occupation and social class were applied a margin still remained, although statistically the results were less clear cut compared with the social class findings. Seemingly therefore it would be unreasonable to argue that the positive correlation between low social class and radical voting was much influenced by an age factor, except to a very small degree. Rather it was the other way round. Much, though not all, of the association between the 21–50 age groups and radicalism was due to their disproportionately strong presence within those social class and occupational groupings which were disproportionately radical anyway.

Secondly considering the electorate as a whole, or at least that sizeable portion of it which was successfully census-linked, the generational phenomenon appeared to a great extent linked to the Liberal party split: i.e. the age disparity on a Liberal versus Conservative basis was insignificant in both 1847 and 1861. Therefore there seems a strong case for explaining the disparity in terms of the politicizing of the young.

Certainly at least as far back as the late 1830s the ultra-radical wing of the locally-dominant Liberal party had been its driving force – the section that had made all the headway. Although this did not immediately produce a decisive split in the party until after 1850, when it did so it was the radicals who usually won: i.e. Walmesley, Gardner, Biggs and Noble. The sole exception before 1861 being Harris's defeat of Walmesley in 1857. Thus there appears to be ample evidence for perceiving the radical Liberals to have been the party in ascendancy, whereas the moderate Liberals, during a time when the Conservatives were offering no real threat, were largely on the defensive. It is therefore possible to argue that the phenomenon of the attraction of the young towards the party in ascendancy, observed in the mid twentieth century voting pattern, was also a feature of electoral choice in mid nineteenth century Leicester.

There are two further points concerning the phenomenon of political generation. Firstly it is clear that in terms of age the Conservative vote lies midway between the two Liberal camps in 1861. This was probably to be expected. Parental influence on electoral choice is recognized as being very potent. As Butler and Stokes discovered voters tend strongly to follow their parents' allegiance, and this influence far outweighs any generational trends<sup>22</sup>. Therefore there is no reason to expect the Conservative voters to have been markedly either older or younger than the Liberal voters as a whole, once occupational and social class factors are taken into account, and the mean  $\phi$  values recorded at the foot of Table 13 demonstrate that this was in fact the case. But regarding the Liberal split the otherwise strong impact of parental preference could not have operated in the same way because no crossing of the traditional party lines was involved. Admittedly ultra-radicalism had been closely associated with the Congregationalists and Baptists, who had since the late 1830s outstripped the earlier Liberalism of the Unitarians, but there is nothing to indicate

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22. *Butler and Stokes, pp49–56.*

that the division in the Liberal party of the 1850s and early 1860s was associated with a cleavage along those particular sectarian lines. For example John Biggs was a Unitarian and a radical, whilst several other candidates on either side of the divide were Anglicans. Therefore it seems unlikely that a man brought up in, say, a Baptist family would have been influenced into voting radical, rather than Liberal moderate, to anything like the extent that one brought up in a Liberal family would have been influenced into voting Liberal as opposed to Conservative.

The second point concerns the votes registered by the high class clerical/professional group in 1861, as recorded in the bottom right hand corner of Table 13. The 272 younger electors which comprised this group gave substantially more support to the Conservative candidate than did the older electors within the same occupational grouping. Moreover the positive correlation (+0.30) between them and Conservative voting, vis-a-vis their elder counterparts, by far exceeds the other ups and downs which characterize the Table 13 data in general. This outcome raises two further points. Firstly it cannot be explained in the same way as the Liberal radical/moderate age disparity because, although there were signs that the local Conservatives were recovering from their eclipse, it had only begun to become apparent within two years of the 1861 election upon which the Table 13 data is based. Therefore there is little to suggest that the younger half of the high class clerical/professional grouping had been exposed to a milieu of local Conservative ascendancy during their formative years. But then again for any political party or section of a party to even begin to gain ascendancy over its rivals it must surely win votes: i.e. although there is evidence that younger voters are inclined to mount upon a rolling bandwaggon it needs a fair number of voters to set it in motion in the first place. In this particular instance the extent of Heygate's victory in 1861 owed something to a distinct shift of opinion among the younger members of the high class clerical and professional grouping: i.e.

the younger electors were not simply giving disproportionately strong support to what had already become the dominant political group – rather they were providing the initial support which made its future dominance more likely. Secondly this stronger affinity for Conservatism on the part of the younger section of the high class clerical/professional grouping, relative to their older counterparts, may in itself be yet another indication of the gradual process of increasing social-class influence on electoral choice, as this grouping was almost certainly representative of the upper middle-class of mid nineteenth century Leicester. Whilst the younger Liberal voters were somewhat inclining towards the radical wing of their party in 1861 (i.e. +0.07) the younger upper middle-class were conversely leaning towards the Conservative party (i.e. +0.30). Of course this high class trend may have been in train for some years. It is not being suggested that the upper middle-class under fifty-one years of age had spontaneously shifted its allegiance in 1861. Indeed change in party allegiance on an individual basis has not been a feature of this research.

But when all is taken into consideration it is not difficult to perceive the association between radicalism and low social class, and the association between Conservatism and the upper middle-class. In both cases and especially with regard to the latter, the younger electors had played a significant role.

Furthermore in the light of the sectarian mini-analysis referred to earlier in this chapter, the moderate Liberal wing had in 1861 become what it certainly had not been a decade or so earlier – a refuge for nonconformity. Maybe this was symptomatic of a change in the nature of Liberal radicalism by 1861. Although P. A. Taylor did make his own standpoint on religious matters clear (and no doubt he had to) his concerns were more secular – more about taxation – more twentieth century in tone. He had no time for the Whigs and Tories, and by implication he had no use for

the religious and quasi-religious cleavages associated with them either. He thought the nation would be best served by the fusion of the two major political parties in order to allow the reformers to get on with their task<sup>23</sup>.

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23. See Ch.4, p101.

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# LISTS OF TABLES & ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 1: Voting Preferences of Leicester Town Dwellers & Outvoters.  
(1847-61)

Election	Town votes			Outvotes	
	Total votes cast (N)	%Ultra- radical	$\delta$	Town votes cast (N)	%Ultra- radical
1847	4,281	72.66	+0.122	451	45.56
1852	5,007	62.21	+0.154	597	37.69
1857	4,369	62.71	+0.131	292	41.10
1859	5,494	53.64	+0.132	459	28.98
1861	3,246	28.22	+0.076	360	16.94

N.B. All data appertaining to Chapter 5 analyses are based upon actual numbers of votes cast and not on the numbers of voters: ie. it is a vote-count, not a head-count.

TABLE 2

## VOTING PREFERENCE BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING: LEICESTER 1847-61

Occupational Grouping.	1847	1852	1857(a)	1857(b)	1859	1861
Drink Trade: N	174	389	155	225	353	217
% ultra-radical	56.9	51.7	85.2	87.6	68.8	35.9
$\phi$	-0.08	-0.05	+0.14	+0.15	+0.11	+0.03
Boot & Shoe: N	81	165	86	80	142	121
% ultra-radical	69.1	61.2	66.3	65.0	57.8	40.5
$\phi$	-0.00	+0.01	+0.02	+0.00	+0.03	+0.04
Building Trades: N	151	313	146	170	292	212
% ultra-radical	66.2	45.7	58.9	55.9	44.2	20.3
$\phi$	-0.02	-0.07	-0.02	-0.05	-0.04	-0.06
Food Trades: N	308	467	227	336	556	403
% ultra-radical	68.2	57.6	57.7	58.6	51.6	22.8
$\phi$	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.04	-0.00	-0.07
Hosiery Trade: N	637	1,110	499	552	770	718
% ultra-radical	84.8	80.9	74.0	73.4	64.0	36.9
$\phi$	+0.21	+0.26	+0.12	+0.10	+0.12	+0.07
Other Textiles: N	233	516	253	286	462	327
% ultra-radical	78.1	70.9	58.9	63.6	52.8	31.2
$\phi$	+0.06	+0.08	-0.03	-0.00	+0.00	+0.00
Clerical & Professional: N	232	512	227	288	494	373
% ultra-radical	54.3	39.3	43.6	50.0	32.0	11.8
$\phi$	-0.11	-0.14	-0.14	-0.10	-0.15	-0.15
Mean $\phi$ value	+0.01	+0.01	+0.01	+0.01	+0.01	-0.02
Total N	1,816	3,544	1,593	1,937	3,069	2,371
% of total linked vote*	78.3	74.2	78.9	74.8	74.3	79.9

\*Actually these percentages are somewhat exaggerated because where the Census recorded 2 occupations the individual's votes may appear in more than one of the 7 groupings listed: eg. 'Framework knitter & Beerhousekeeper' would be numbered among the Hosiery trade and the Drink trade groupings. But 'Clerk in Hosiery trade' would number among the Hosiery trade only and not in the Clerical & Professional grouping.

TABLE 3

VOTING PREFERENCE BY SOCIAL CLASS WITHIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING: LEICESTER 1847-61.

Occupational Grouping	1847	1852	1857(a)	1857(b)	1859	1861
Drink Trade						
Low % ultra-radical	59.0(N= 95)	59.1(N=186)	90.3(N= 72)	87.3(N=118)	73.7(N=179)	44.4(N=108)
High % " "	54.4(N= 79)	44.4(N=203)	80.7(N= 83)	87.9(N=107)	63.8(N=174)	27.5(N=109)
$\phi$ (Low class)	+0.05	+0.14		+0.06	+0.10	+0.18
Boot & Shoe						
Low % ultra-radical	57.2(N= 49)	56.5(N=115)	65.6(N= 61)	68.0(N= 53)	52.3(N= 90)	38.6(N= 83)
High % " "	84.5(N= 32)	72.0(N= 50)	68.0(N= 25)	59.2(N= 27)	67.3(N= 52)	44.7(N= 38)
$\phi$ (Low class)	-0.29	-0.15		+0.03	-0.15	-0.06
Building Trades						
Low % ultra-radical	60.4(N= 86)	42.6(N=202)	56.8(N= 81)	57.2(N=105)	52.4(N=187)	26.6(N=143)
High % " "	73.8(N= 65)	51.3(N=111)	61.6(N= 65)	55.8(N= 65)	30.5(N=105)	7.2(N= 69)
$\phi$ (Low class)	-0.14	-0.09		-0.01	+0.24	+0.24
Food Trades						
Low % ultra-radical	67.1(N=161)	60.3(N=322)	65.9(N=126)	69.5(N=187)	58.9(N=297)	27.3(N=238)
High % " "	69.4(N=147)	51.7(N=145)	47.5(N=101)	45.0(N=149)	43.2(N=259)	16.4(N=165)
$\phi$ (Low class)	-0.02	+0.07		+0.22	+0.16	+0.14
Hosiery Trade						
Low % ultra-radical	83.8(N=499)	81.6(N=836)	76.2(N=365)	78.8(N=414)	73.2(N=533)	41.7(N=564)
High % " "	88.4(N=138)	79.3(N=274)	67.9(N=134)	56.6(N=138)	43.5(N=237)	19.4(N=154)
$\phi$ (Low class)	-0.03	+0.03		+0.16	+0.30	+0.19
Other Textiles						
Low % ultra-radical	82.8(N=134)	79.6(N=284)	61.8(N=110)	70.2(N=151)	61.9(N=231)	37.4(N=190)
High % " "	71.7(N= 99)	60.3(N=232)	57.0(N=143)	56.6(N=134)	43.7(N=231)	22.6(N=137)
$\phi$ (Low class)	+0.03	+0.23		+0.10	+0.18	+0.18
Clerical & Professional						
Low % ultra-radical	69.4(N= 72)	53.2(N=216)	48.6(N= 72)	62.0(N=129)	39.8(N=191)	20.8(N=154)
High % " "	47.5(N=160)	29.1(N=296)	41.0(N=156)	40.3(N=159)	27.1(N=303)	5.5(N=219)
$\phi$ (low class)	+0.22	+0.24		+0.14	+0.13	+0.25
Mean $\phi$ value	-0.02(5)	+0.06(5)		+0.10(0)	+0.13(5)	+0.16(0)

TABLE 4: DISPROPORTIONATION IN ULTRA-RADICAL SUPPORT: LOW CLASS HOSIERY TRADE V HIGH CLASS CLERICAL & PROFESSIONAL

	1847	1852	1857(a&b)	1859	1861
Low class Hosiery: % ultra-radical	83.8(N=499)	81.6(N=890)	77.5(N=799)	73.2(N=533)	41.7(N=564)
High class Clerical & Professional: % "	47.5(N=160) +0.36	29.1(N=296) +0.49	40.7(N=315) +0.36	27.1(N=303) +0.44(+0.42)	5.5(N=219) +0.32(+0.41)
$\phi$					
High class Hosiery: % ultra-radical	88.4(N=138)	79.3(N=292)	56.8(N=272)	43.5(N=237)	19.4(N=154)
High class Clerical & Professional: % "	47.5(N=160) +0.43	29.1(N=296) +0.45	40.7(N=315) +0.21	27.1(N=303) +0.17(+0.12)	5.5(N=219) +0.22(+0.18)
$\phi$					
Difference	-0.07	+0.04	+0.15	+0.27(+0.30)	+0.10(+0.23)

NOTE. { Bracketed  $\phi$  values indicate correlation levels when Conservative  
vote is discounted.  
N = number of votes upon which the adjacent figure was calculated.

TABLE 5: PARTY VOTING BY LOW SOCIAL CLASS: LEICESTER 1859 & 1861.

Occupational Grouping	1859				1861			
	Lib/Con	Rad/Mod.Lib	Rad/Con	Mod.Lib/Con	Lib/Con	Rad/Mod.Lib	Rad/Con	Mod.Lib/Con
	$\phi$	$\phi$	$\phi$	$\phi$	$\phi$	$\phi$	$\phi$	$\phi$
Drink Trade	+0.14	-0.01	+0.14	+0.15	+0.16	+0.11	+0.18	+0.00
Boot & Shoe	-0.12	-0.10	-0.15	-0.06	-0.10	-0.00	-0.10	-0.00
Building Trades	+0.06	+0.26	+0.17	-0.10	-0.05	+0.46	+0.19	-0.24
Food Trades	+0.00	+0.15	+0.13	-0.03	-0.01	+0.21	+0.08	-0.11
Hosiery Trade	+0.10	+0.30	+0.19	-0.07	-0.06	+0.30	+0.10	-0.20
Other Textiles	+0.16	+0.19	+0.21	+0.04	+0.12	+0.10	+0.20	+0.10
Clerical & Professional	+0.07	+0.11	+0.00	+0.03	+0.14	+0.29	+0.29	+0.06
Mean $\phi$ value	+0.06	+0.13	+0.10	-0.01	+0.03	+0.21	+0.13	-0.06

Note: Lib = Liberal. Con = Conservative. Rad = ultra-radical Liberal. Mod.Lib = moderate Liberal.

TABLE 6

MEAN AGE (YEARS) OF VOTERS PER CANDIDATE: LEICESTER 1847-61.

Candidate	1847	1852	1857(a)	1857(b)	1859	1861
<u>Walmesley</u>	46.19 (N=806)	46.29 (N=1,433)	46.67 (N=582)	45.58 (N=763)		
<u>Gardner</u>	46.04 (N=786)	46.33 (N=1,422)				
<u>Biggs</u>			47.14 (N=688)	46.80 (N=884)	46.67 (N=1,088)	
<u>Noble</u>					46.21 (N=1,038)	
<u>Taylor</u>						45.01 (N=798)
<u>Parker</u>	46.41 (N=713)					
<u>Wilde</u>		48.02 (N=970)				
<u>Palmer</u>		48.03 (N=968)				
<u>Harris</u>			47.49 (N=767)	47.82 (N=931)	48.51 (N=957)	47.60 (N=850)
<u>Heygate</u>					48.17 (N=1,031)	46.91 (N=1,310)

TABLE 7

VOTE DISTRIBUTION FOR CANDIDATES BY 10 YEAR AGE COHORTS:  
LEICESTER 1847-61.

1847	<u>Walmesley</u>	<u>Gardner</u>	<u>Parker</u>	
	21-30=10.61%(N=84)	11.18%(N= 87)	10.67%(N= 76)	
	31-40=24.49%(N=194)	24.81%(N=193)	25.28%(N=180)	
	41-50=30.18%(N=239)	29.56%(N=230)	28.37%(N=202)	
	51-60=22.10%(N=175)	20.95%(N=163)	20.93%(N=149)	
	61-70= 8.84%(N= 70)	9.51%(N= 74)	10.25%(N= 73)	
	71-80+=3.79%(N= 30)	3.98%(N= 31)	4.49%(N= 32)	
	Total =100% (N=792)	100%(N=778)	100%(N=712)	
1852	<u>Walmesley</u>	<u>Gardner</u>	<u>Wilde</u>	<u>Palmer</u>
	21-30=11.75%(N=167)	11.78%(N=167)	10.36%(N=100)	10.18%(N= 98)
	31-40=24.63%(N=350)	24.47%(N=347)	22.07%(N=213)	22.22%(N=214)
	41-50=27.59%(N=392)	27.36%(N=388)	25.70%(N=248)	25.75%(N=248)
	51-60=20.13%(N=286)	20.24%(N=287)	22.07%(N=213)	22.12%(N=213)
	61-70=11.26%(N=160)	11.50%(N=163)	13.78%(N=133)	13.71%(N=132)
	71-80+=4.64%(N= 66)	4.65%(N= 66)	6.01%(N= 58)	6.02%(N= 58)
	Total=100%(N=1,491)	100%(N=1,418)	100%(N=965)	100%(N=963)
1857	<u>Harris</u>	<u>Biggs</u>	<u>Walmesley</u>	
	21-30= 9.80%(N= 91)	9.45%(N= 83)	10.48%(N= 80)	
	31-40=21.85%(N=203)	24.15%(N=212)	25.03%(N=191)	
	41-50=26.91%(N=250)	28.36%(N=249)	27.52%(N=210)	
	51-60=24.00%(N=223)	23.58%(N=207)	23.59%(N=180)	
	61-70=11.84%(N=110)	10.93%(N= 96)	11.14%(N= 85)	
	71-80+=5.60%(N= 52)	3.53%(N= 31)	2.23%(N= 17)	
	Total = 100%(N=929)	100%(N=878)	100%(N=763)	



TABLE 7 (Continued)

1859	<u>Biggs</u>	<u>Noble</u>	<u>Harris</u>	<u>Heygate</u>
21-30=	6.17%(N= 66)	6.53%(N= 67)	5.99%(N= 57)	5.38%(N= 55)
31-40=	21.23%(N=227)	21.93%(N=225)	19.98%(N=190)	22.11%(N=226)
41-50=	26.94%(N=288)	26.41%(N=271)	25.55%(N=243)	25.64%(N=262)
51-60=	25.54%(N=273)	27.00%(N=277)	26.50%(N=252)	25.24%(N=258)
61-70=	13.94%(N=149)	12.57%(N=129)	13.56%(N=129)	13.60%(N=139)
71-80+=	6.18%(N= 66)	5.56%(N= 57)	8.42%(N= 80)	8.02%(N= 82)
Total=	100%(N=1,069)	100%(N=1,026)	100%(N=951)	100%(N=1,022)

1861	<u>Harris</u>	<u>Heygate</u>	<u>Taylor</u>
21-30=	12.37%(N=105)	13.07%(N=171)	16.83%(N=134)
31-40=	22.85%(N=194)	24.08%(N=315)	23.99%(N=191)
41-50=	22.85%(N=194)	24.85%(N=325)	24.25%(N=193)
51-60=	22.38%(N=190)	20.26%(N=265)	21.36%(N=170)
61-70=	12.84%(N=109)	11.77%(N=154)	9.80%(N= 78)
71-80+=	6.71%(N= 57)	5.96%(N= 78)	3.77%(N= 30)
Total =	100%(N=849)	100%(N=1,308)	100%(N=796)

TABLE 8

CORRELATION OF AGE WITH ULTRA-RADICAL SUPPORT: 1847-61

Election	1847	1852	1857	1859	1861
Age-range:21-50	1,485	2,932	1,569	2,177	1,822
Ultra-radical vote	1,027	1,811	1,025	1,144	518
Total moderate vote	458	1,121	544	1,033	1,304
Age-range 51-80+	797	1,835	1,001	1,891	1,131
Ultra-radical vote	543	1,028	616	951	278
Total moderate vote	254	807	385	940	853
$\phi$	+0.01	+0.06	+0.04	+0.02	+0.04
( $\phi$ when Biggs & Heygate are discounted)			(+0.05)	(+0.03)	(+0.07)

TABLE 9

CORRELATION BETWEEN 21-50 AGE VOTERS & ULTRA-RADICAL SUPPORT IN 1852.

	Leicester Residents	Outvoters	Total
Age-range:21-50	2,630 (89.7%)	302 (10.3%)	2,932 (100%)
Ultra-radical vote	1,685	126	1,811
Total moderate vote	945	176	1,121
Age-range:51-80+	1,589 (86.6%)	246 (13.4%)	1,835 (100%)
Ultra-radical vote	942	86	1,028
Total moderate vote	647	160	807
$\phi$	+0.05	+0.07	+0.06

TABLE 10

VOTE DISTRIBUTION BY AGE: MATCHING OF 2 OCCUPATIONAL GROUPINGS(1852)

Age-range	21-50	51-80+	Total
Hosiery Trade	668(70.0%) [57.5%]	494(68.6%) [42.5%]	1,162 [100.0%]
Clerical/ Professional	286(30.0%) [55.9%]	226(31.4%) [44.1%]	512 [100.0%]
Total	954(100.0%)	720(100.0%)	

TABLE 11

VOTE DISTRIBUTION BY AGE: SOCIAL CLASS DISPARITY WITHIN 2  
OCCUPATIONAL GROUPINGS (1852)

Age-range	21-50	51-80+
Hosiery Trade Low Class	488(73.1%)	402(81.4%)
" " High Class	180(26.9%)	92(18.6%)
Total	668(100.0%)	494(100.0%)
Clerical/ Professional Low Class	128(44.8%)	88(38.9%)
" High Class	158(55.2%)	138(61.1%)
Total	286(100.0%)	226(100.0%)

TABLE 12

CORRELATION BETWEEN YOUNGER(21-50) ELECTORS &amp; ULTRA-RADICAL SUPPORT(1847-61)

Election:-		1847	1852	1857	1859	1861
Occupational Grouping		$\phi$ N	$\phi$ N	$\phi$ N	$\phi$ N	$\phi$ N
Food Trades:	L.C.	-0.00:161	+0.06:322	-0.06:201	+0.11:297	+0.06:238
"	H.C.	-0.09:129	+0.05:290	+0.07:149	+0.11:259	+0.14:165
Hosiery Trade:	L.C.	-0.02:499	+0.01:445	+0.02:413	+0.01:533	+0.02:436
"	H.C.	+0.13:138	+0.05:136	-0.14:135	-0.09:237	-0.01:156
Other Textiles:	L.C.	+0.01:134	+0.08:142	+0.15:151	-0.01:234	-0.01:190
"	H.C.	-0.12: 99	+0.04:116	-0.02:134	+0.12:225	+0.12:137
Clerical/Prof :	L.C.	-0.07: 72	-0.06:216	+0.08:129	-0.03:191	-0.01:154
"	H.C.	+0.14:160	+0.06:296	-0.10:159	-0.11:303	-0.11:272
Mean $\phi$	L.C.	-0.02	+0.02	+0.05	+0.02	+0.02
	H.C.	-0.02	+0.05	-0.05	+0.01	+0.04
Overall Mean $\phi$		-0.00	+0.04	+0.00	+0.01	+0.03
(Overall Mean $\phi$ when Biggs & Heygate are discounted.)				(+0.01)	(+0.02)	(+0.07)

TABLE 13

CORRELATION BETWEEN YOUNGER(21-50) ELECTORS &amp; LIBERAL SUPPORT(1861)

	Food Trade	Hosiery Trade	Other Textiles	Clerical/ Professional
L.C. $\phi$	+0.03(N=238)	-0.07(N=436)	+0.05(N=190)	-0.00(N=154)
H.C. $\phi$	+0.11(N=165)	+0.07(N=156)	+0.16(N=137)	-0.30(N=272)
Mean $\phi$ = -0.00(5)				
(Mean $\phi$ 1847 = -0.00(3))				

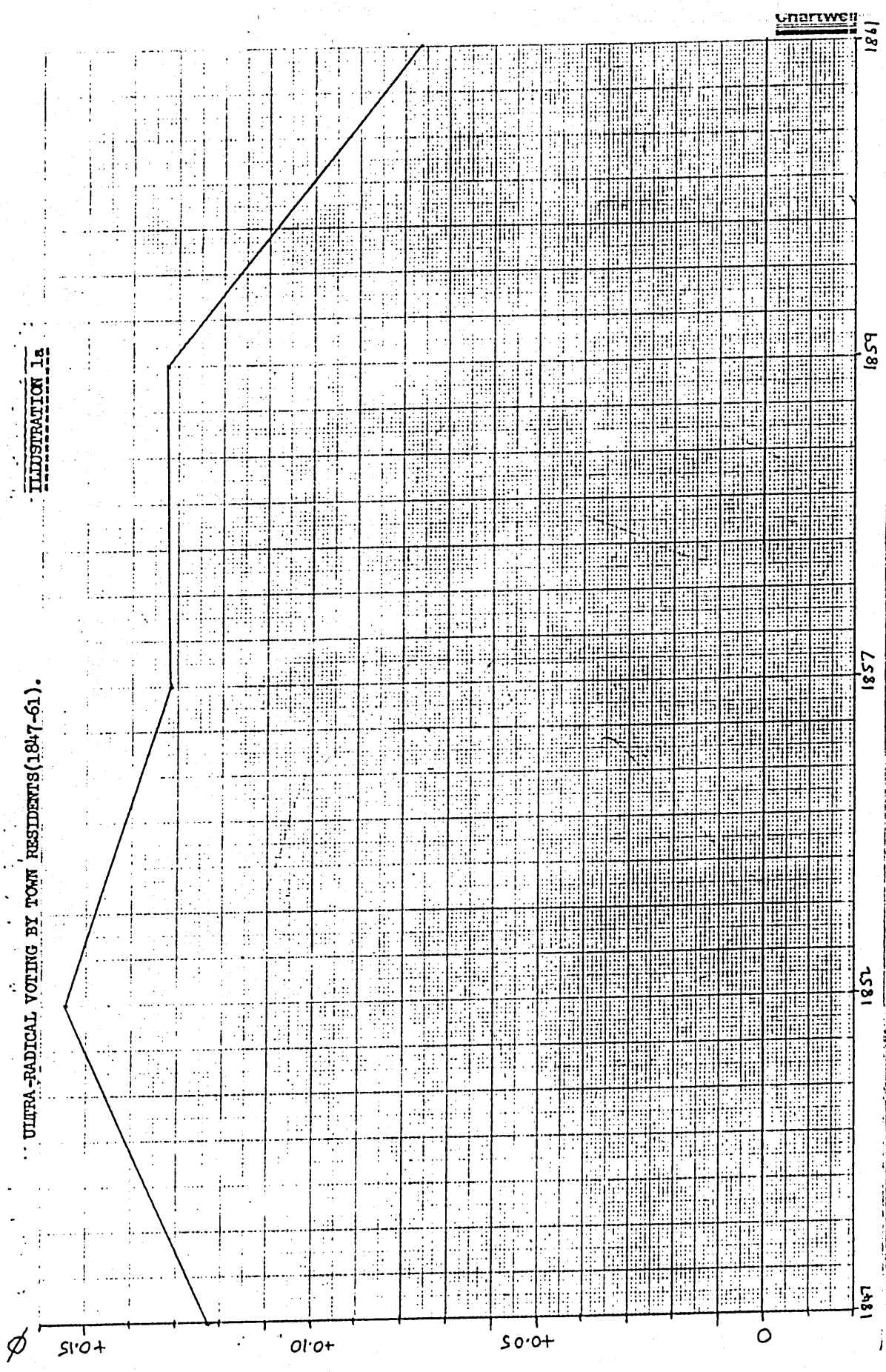
NOTE: L.C. = Low social class: H.C. = High social class.

TABLE 14  
CLERGYMEN VOTING IN LEICESTER (1847-61).

Election	← Ultra-radical Liberal → Walmesley Gardner Biggs Noble Taylor			← Moderate Liberal → Wilde Palmer Harris		← Conservative → Parker Heygate	
	CE	NC	RC				
1847	Nil	Nil	-	-	-	7	-
	7	7	-	-	-	Nil	-
	1	1	-	-	-	Nil	-
1852	Nil	Nil	-	-	14	-	-
	9	9	-	-	Nil	-	-
	2	2	-	-	Nil	-	-
1857	Nil	-	1	-	-	7	-
	Nil	-	3	-	-	-	-
	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
1859	-	Nil	1	-	3	-	7
	-	4	1	-	6	-	2
	-	1	1	-	Nil	-	Nil
1861	-	-	-	Nil	1	-	11
	-	-	-	1	11	-	Nil
	-	-	-	Nil	Nil	-	Nil

NOTE: CE = Church of England: NC = Nonconformist: RC = Roman Catholic.

ULTRA-RADICAL VOTING BY TOWN RESIDENTS (1847-61).



ULTRA-RADICAL VOTING BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING (1847-61).

ILLUSTRATION 2a

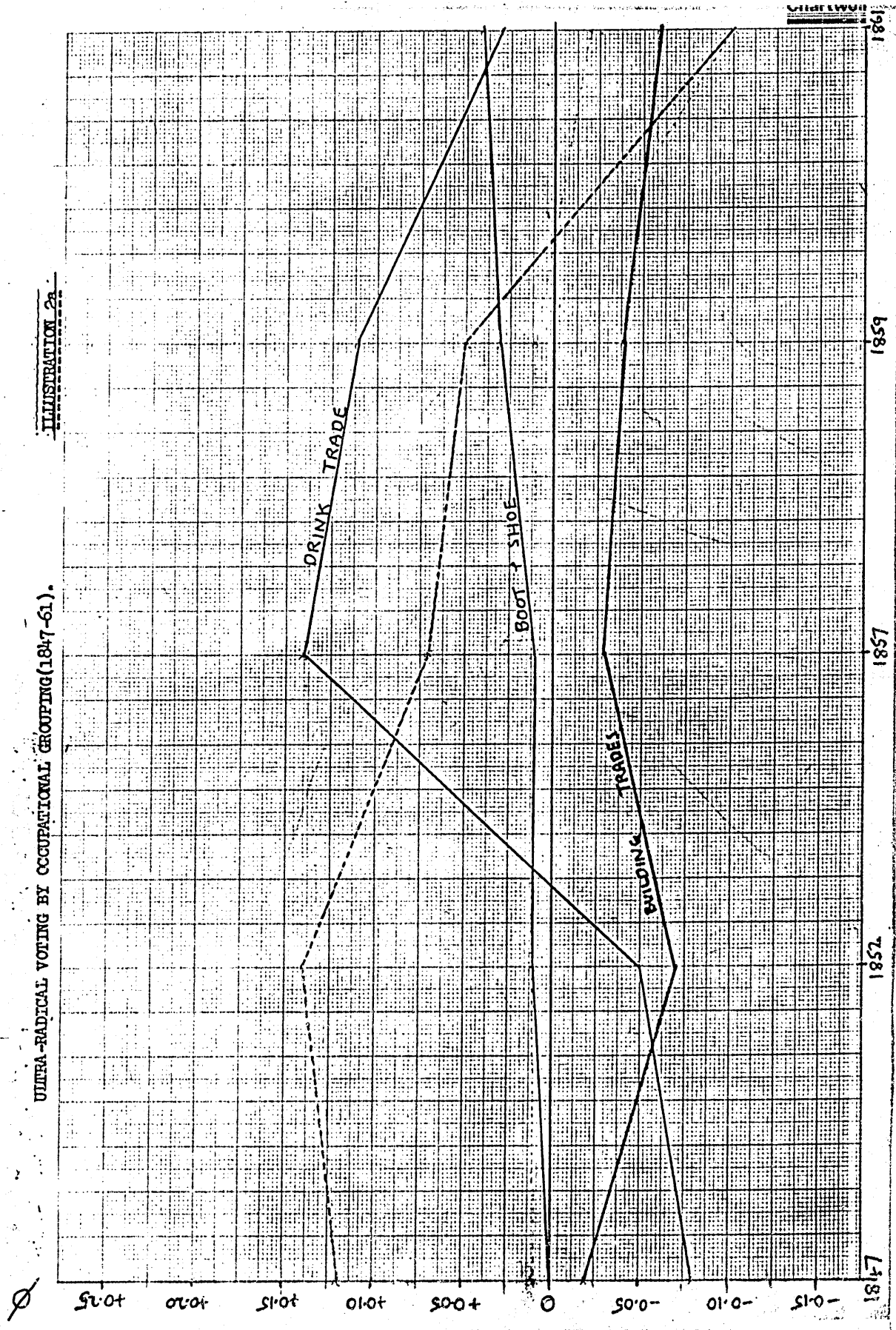
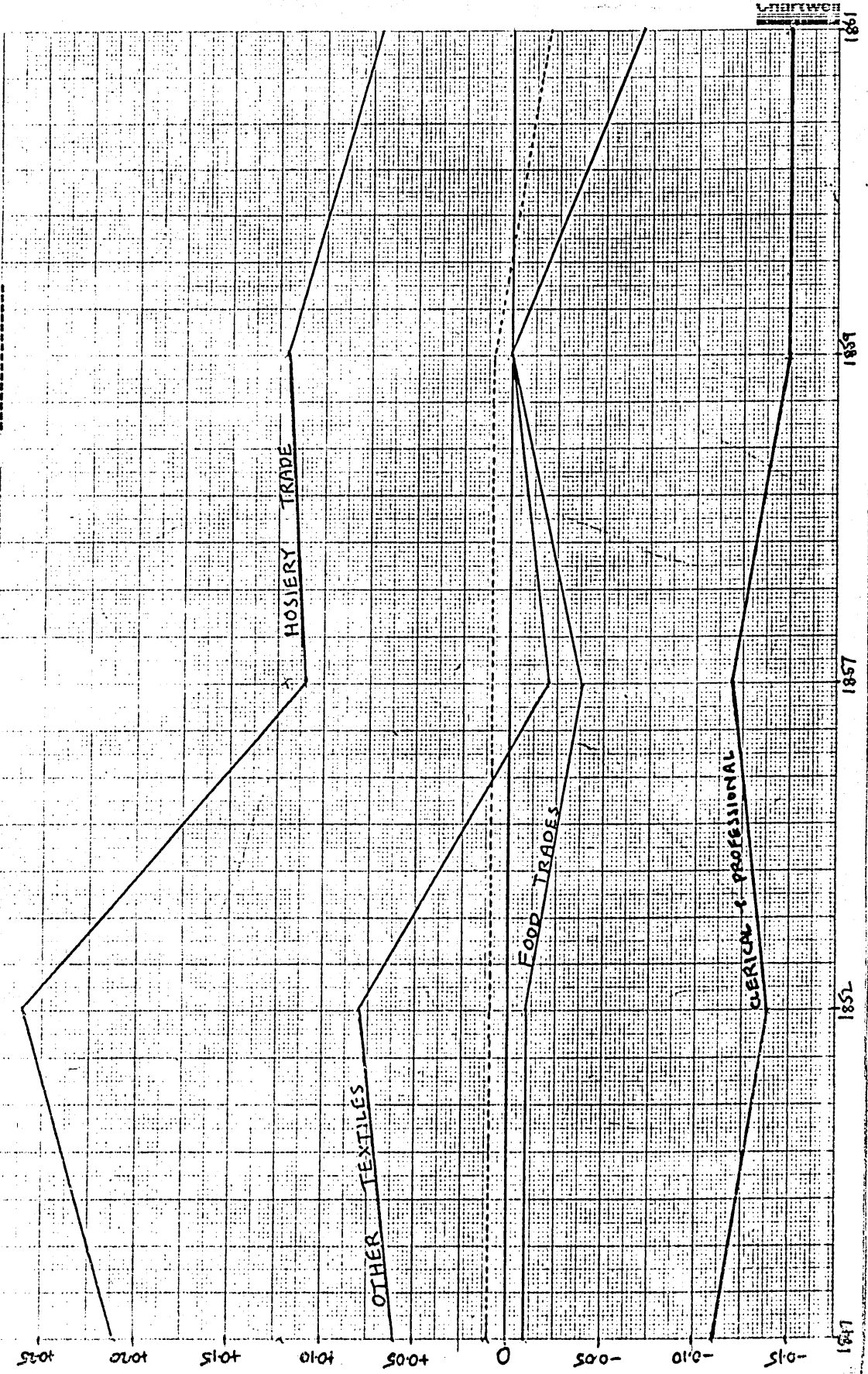
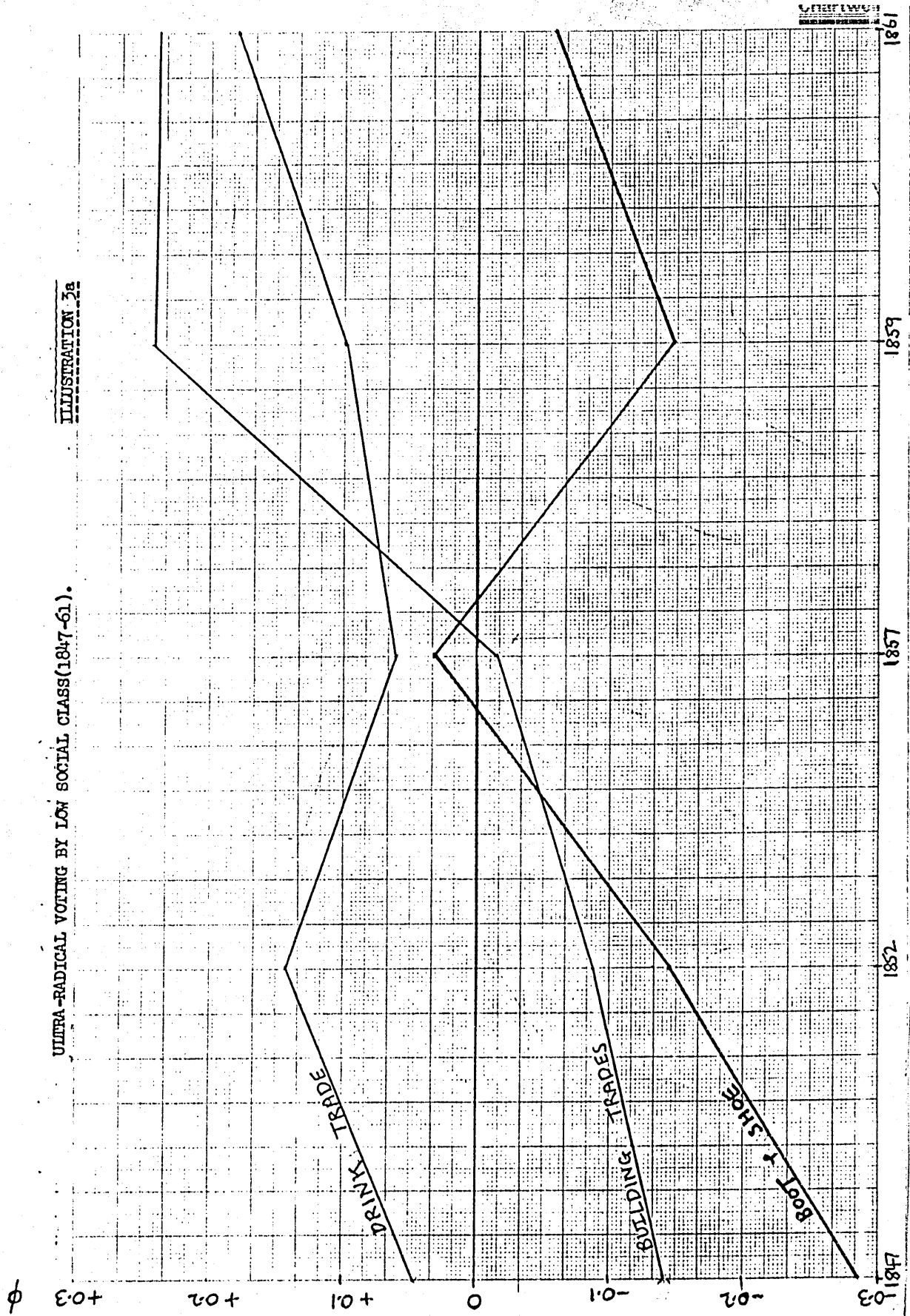


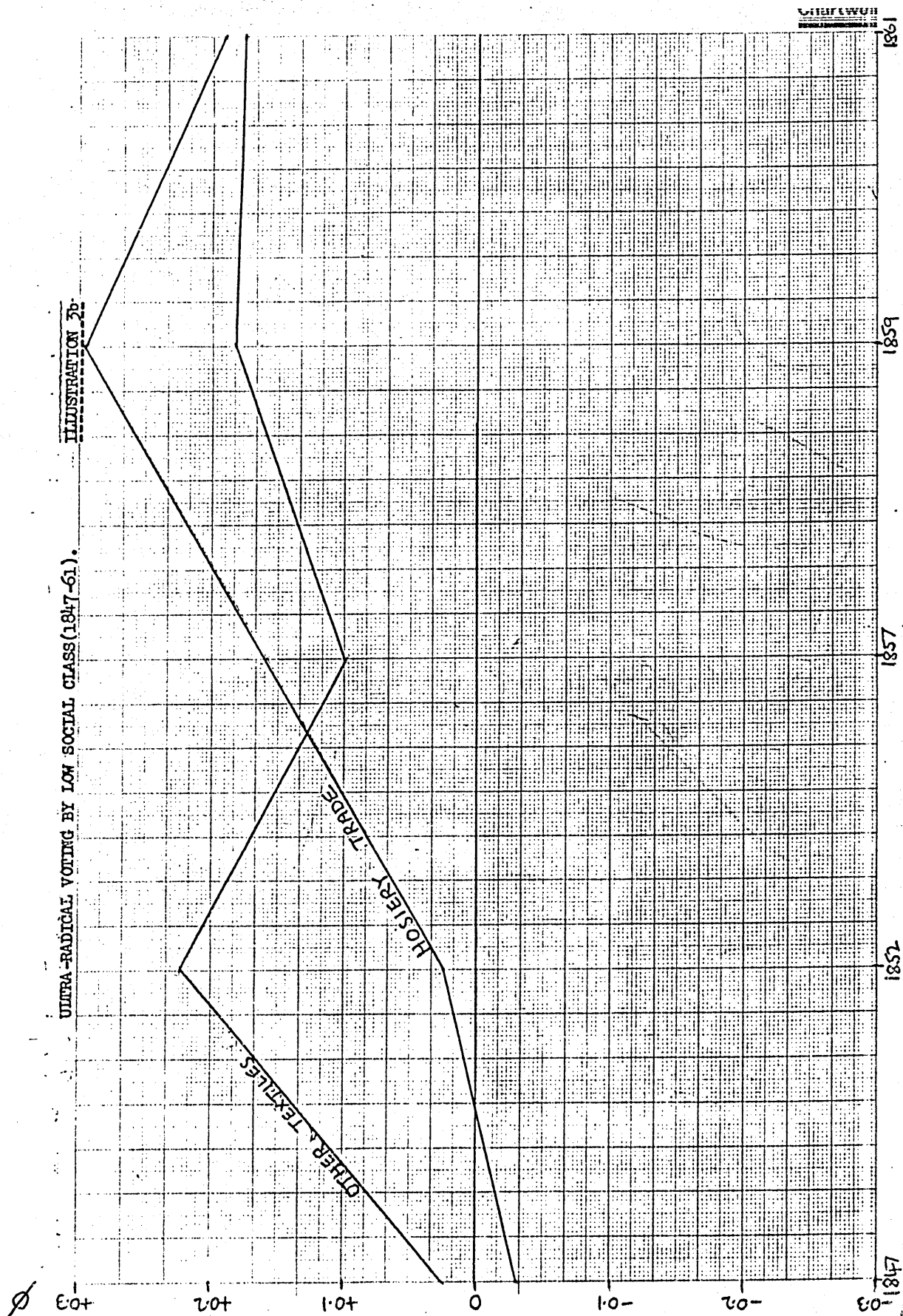
ILLUSTRATION 26

ULTRA-RADICAL VOTING BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING (1847-61).



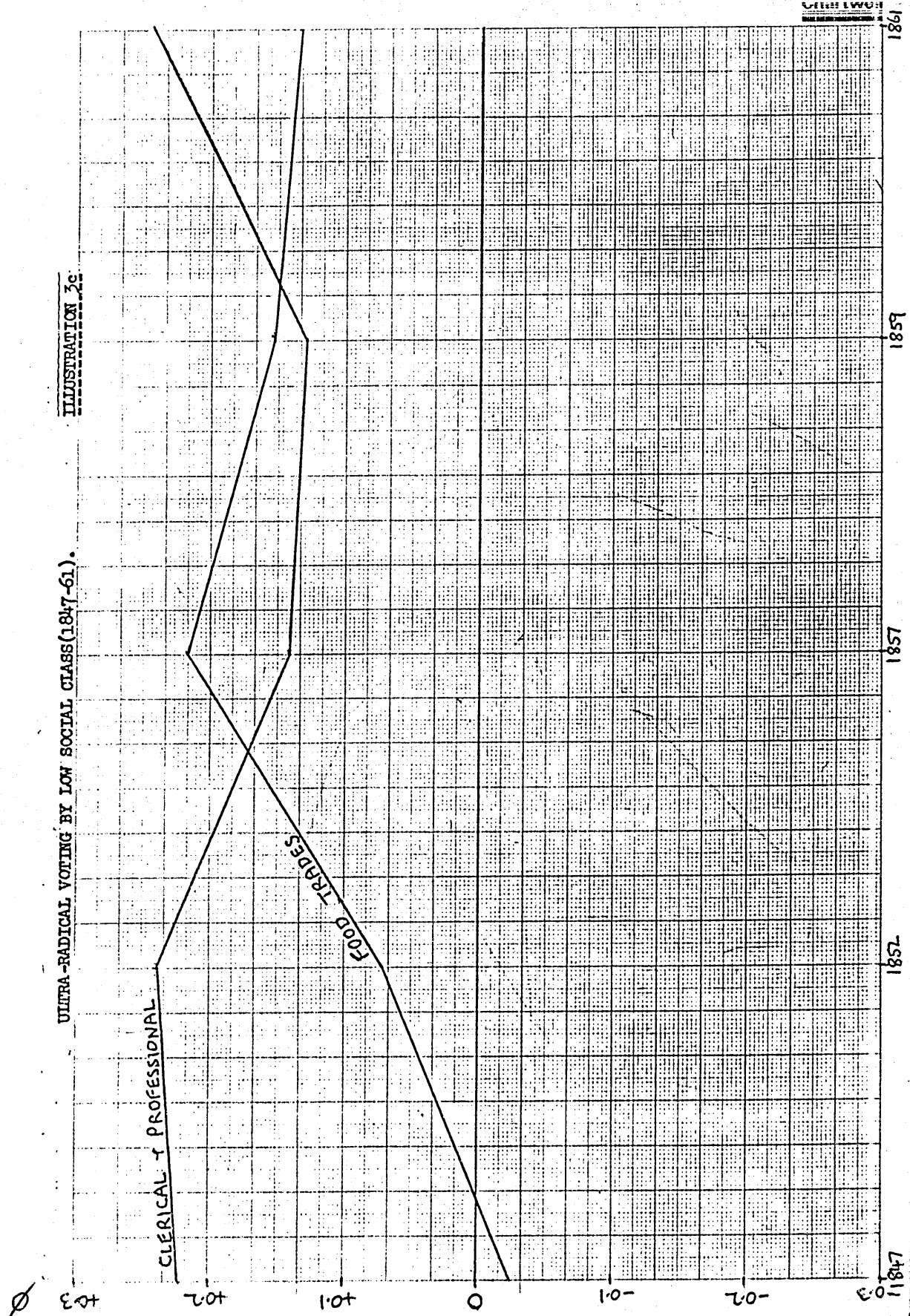






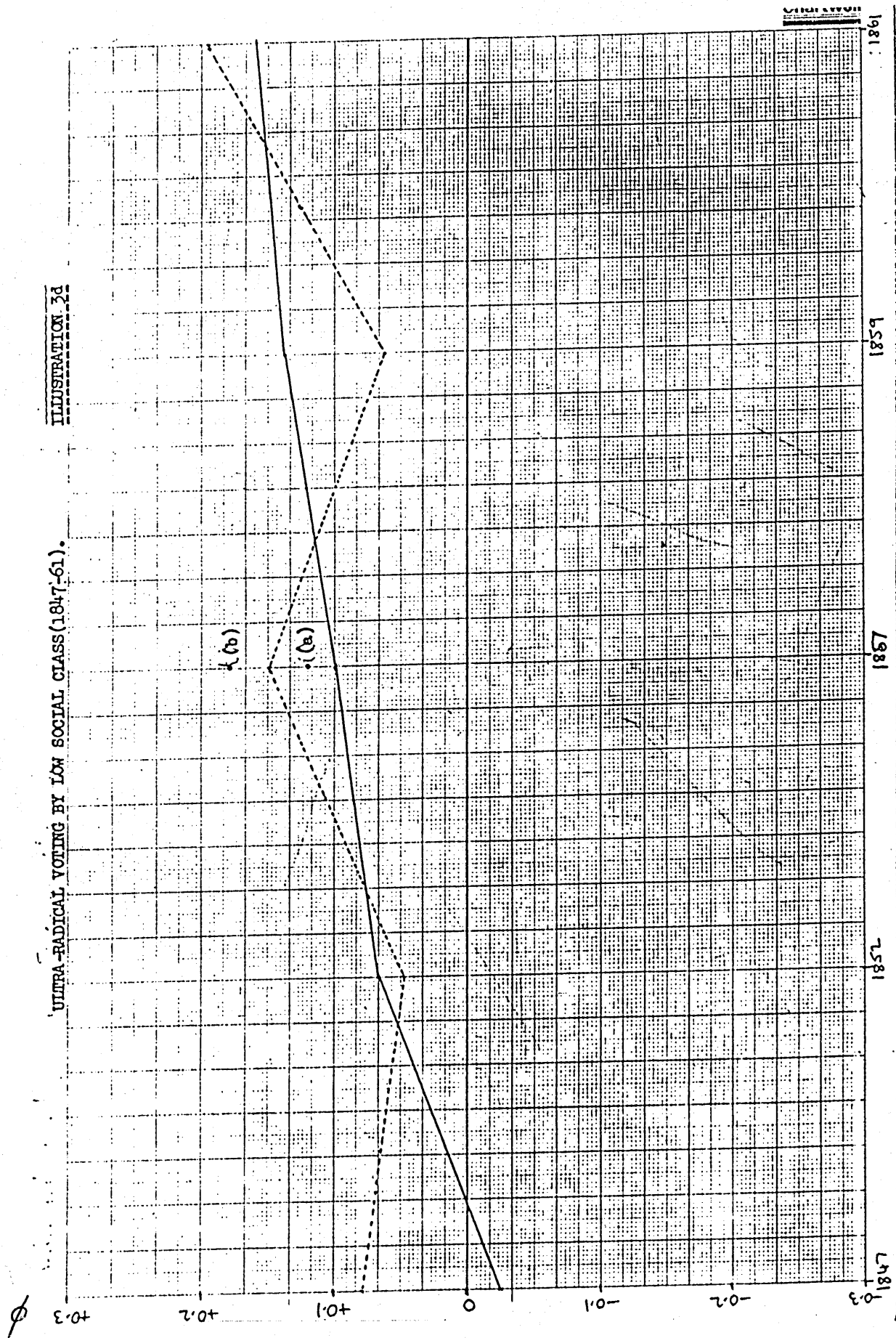
ULTRA-RADICAL VOTING BY LOW SOCIAL CLASS (1847-61).

ILLUSTRATION 3c



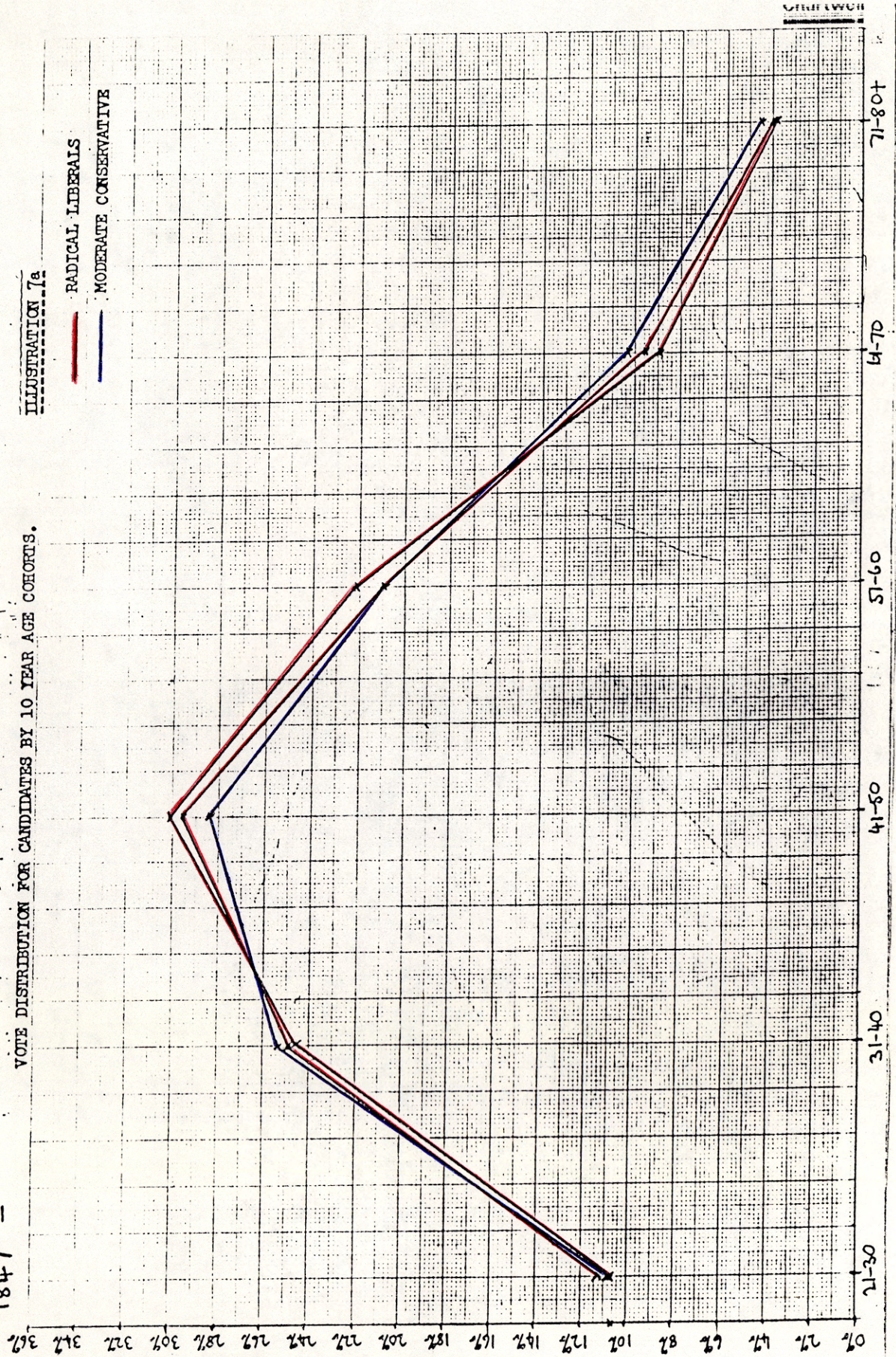
ULTRA-RADICAL VOTING BY LOW SOCIAL CLASS (1847-61).

ILLUSTRATION 3d





## VOTE DISTRIBUTION FOR CANDIDATES BY 10 YEAR AGE COHORTS.

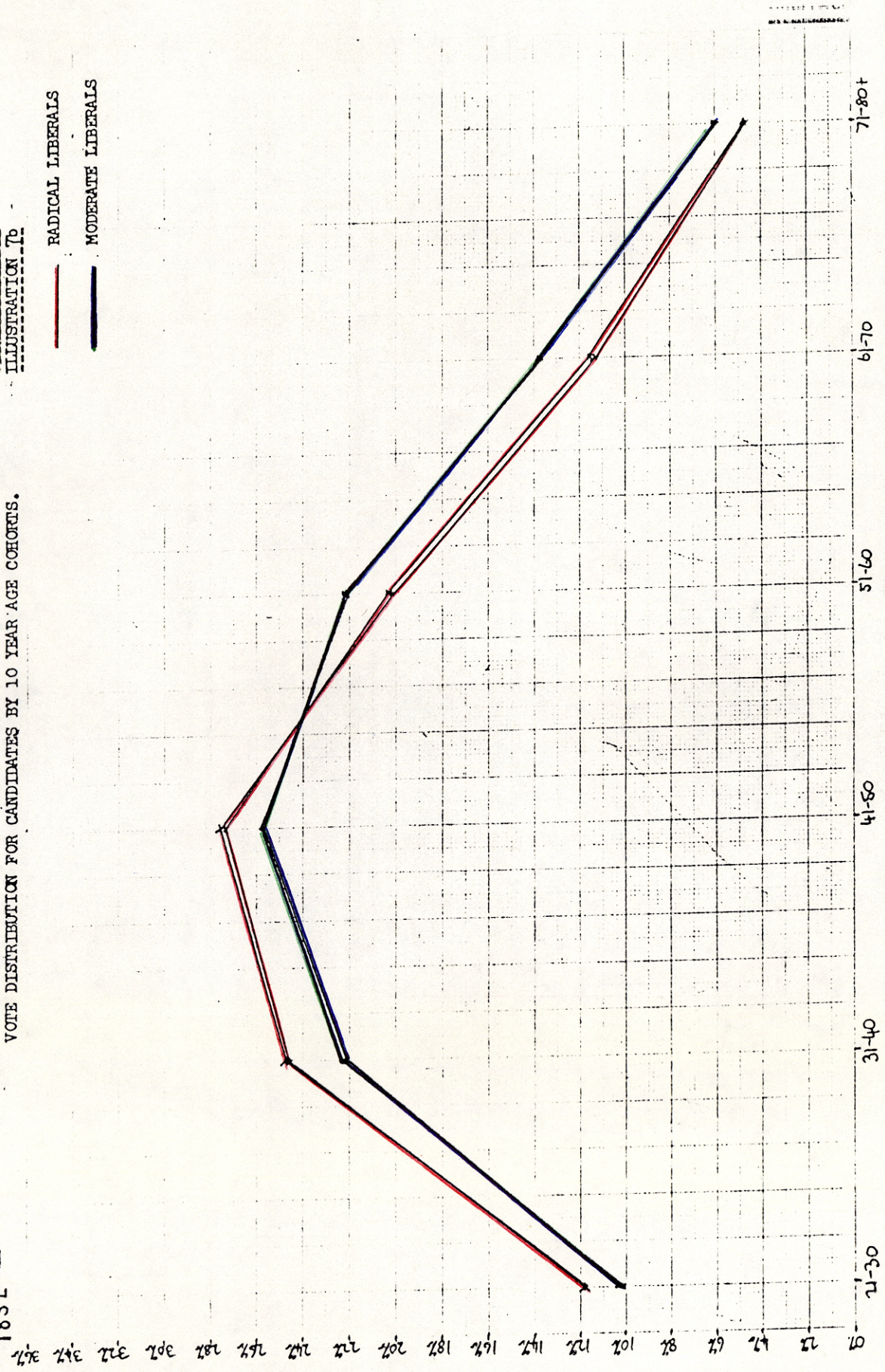




VOTE DISTRIBUTION FOR CANDIDATES BY 10 YEAR AGE COHORTS.

ILLUSTRATION 7b

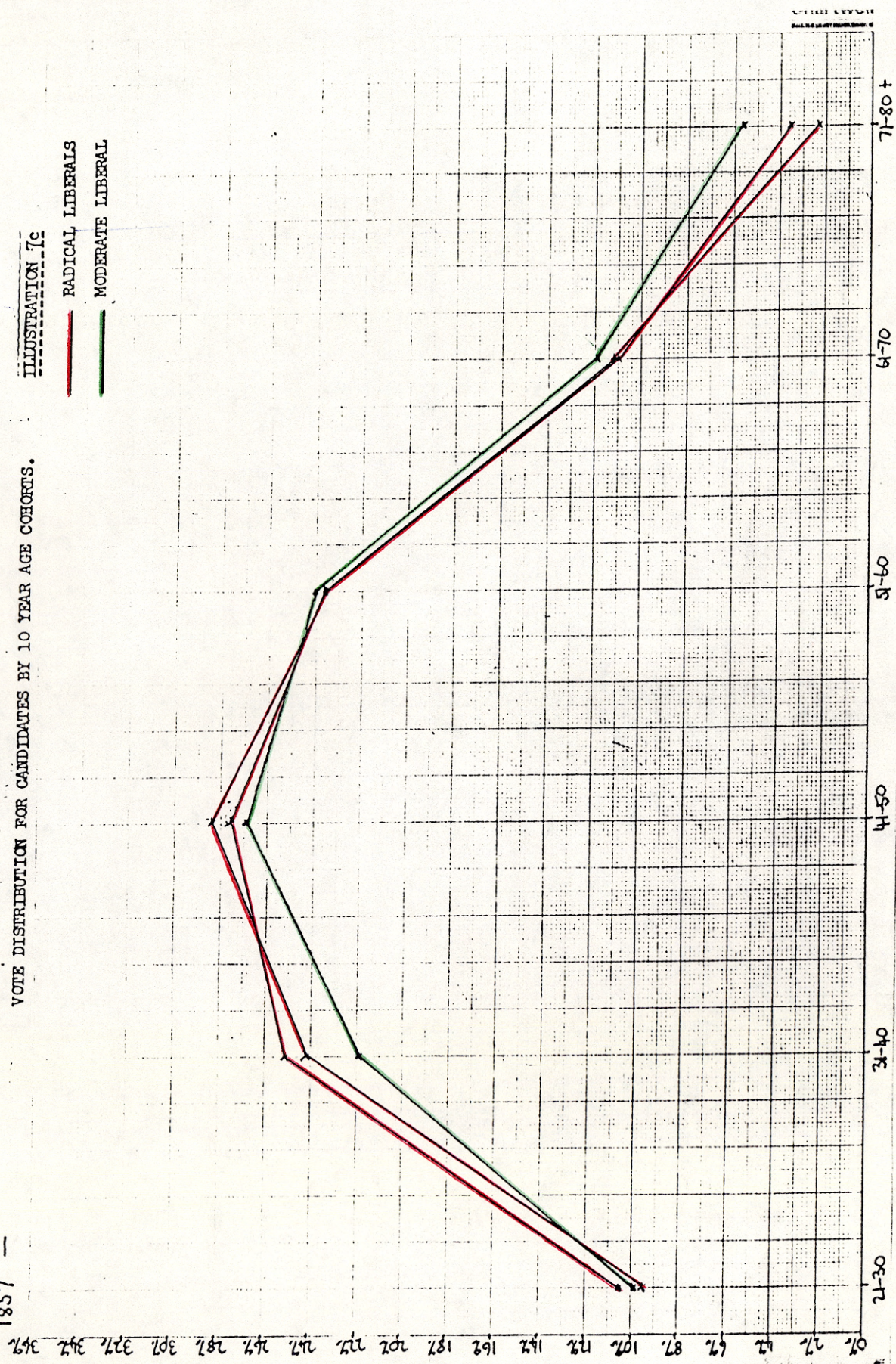
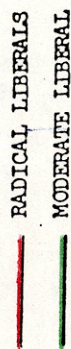
RADICAL LIBERALS  
MODERATE LIBERALS





VOTE DISTRIBUTION FOR CANDIDATES BY 10 YEAR AGE COHORTS.

ILLUSTRATION 7c

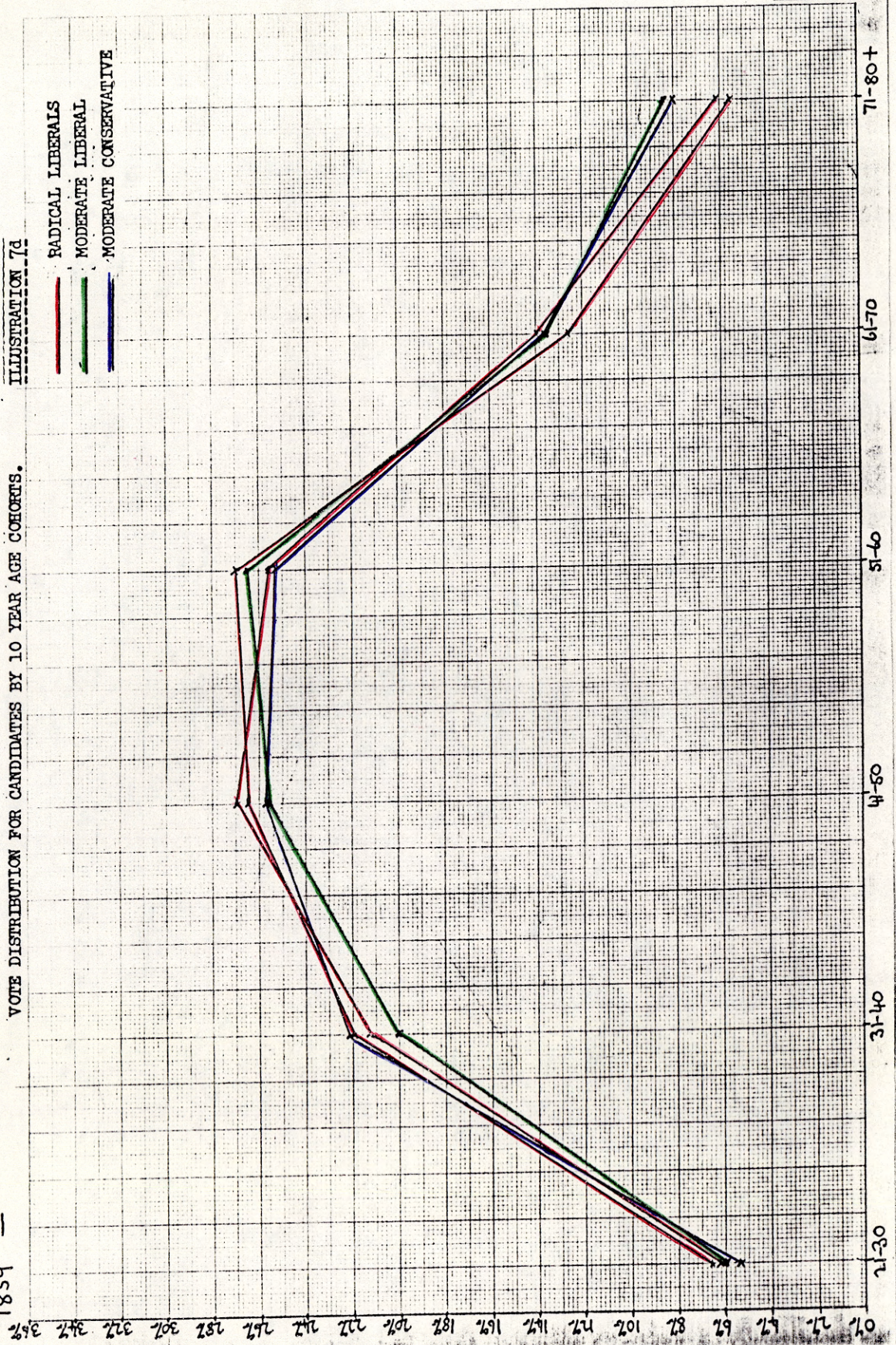




VOTE DISTRIBUTION FOR CANDIDATES BY 10 YEAR AGE COHORTS.

ILLUSTRATION 7a

- RADICAL LIBERALS
- MODERATE LIBERAL
- MODERATE CONSERVATIVE

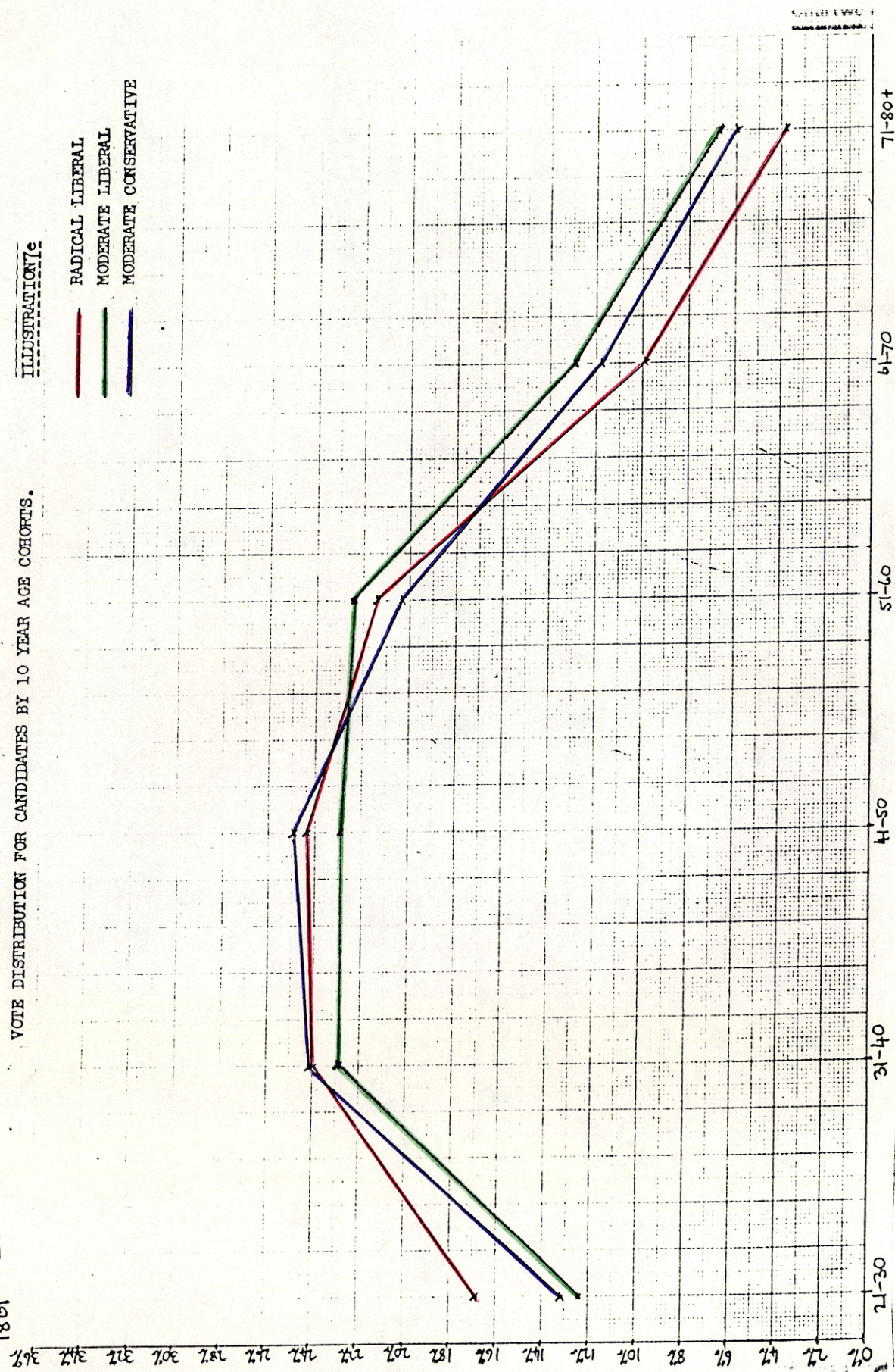




VOTE DISTRIBUTION FOR CANDIDATES BY 10 YEAR AGE COHORTS.

ILLUSTRATION 7c

- RADICAL LIBERAL
- MODERATE LIBERAL
- MODERATE CONSERVATIVE





APPENDIX ONE (A)

Parliamentary Election Results: Leicester 1847-61.

1847	Sir J. Walmesley	1,647
	Richard Gardner	1,602
	J.W. Parker	1,483

1852	Sir J. Walmesley	1,673
	Richard Gardner	1,673
	James Wilde	1,116
	Geoffrey Palmer	1,114

1857	J.D. Harris	1,618
	John Biggs	1,603
	Sir J. Walmesley	1,440

1859	John Biggs	1,584
	Dr. J. Noble	1,496
	W.M. Heygate	1,479
	J.D. Harris	1,397

1861	W.M. Heygate	1,596
	J.D. Harris	1,033
	P.A. Taylor	977

## APPENDIX ONE (B)

[illegible]

## APPENDIX TWO

Pollbook - Census Linkage levels by votes cast: ie. an enumeration of votes, not voters. Data on abstainers was initially recorded but not used in the analyses presented in Chapter 5.

Election Date:	1847	1852	1857	1857	1859	1861
Census:	1851	1851	1851	1861	1861	1861
Pollbook Borough votes	4,280	4,979	4,318	4,318	5,497	3,225
Linked Borough votes	1,931	4,234	2,049	2,333	3,709	2,625
Percentage Linkage	45.1	85.0	47.5	54.0	67.5	81.4
P/book Non-resident votes	452	597	344	344	459	381
Linked Non-resident votes	374	549	258	258	424	333
Percentaged Linked	82.7	92.0	75.0	75.0	92.6	87.4
Total P/book vote	4,732	5,576	4,661	4,661	5,956	3,606
Total Linked vote	2,305	4,783	2,307	2,591	4,133	2,958
Percentage Linked	48.7	85.8	49.5	55.6	69.4	82.0

Note: Linkage was clearly more successful among the outvoters than among the Borough voters, despite losses among the former category for the reason indicated in the first section of Chapter 5. This outcome strongly suggests that the outvoters were far less inclined to leave their respective villages than were the Borough dwellers to leave their respective streets.

### APPENDIX THREE

The 'Correlation Coefficient', or more precisely the 'Mean Square Contingency Coefficient, O' indicates the strength of association between two dichotomous variables. All analyses quoting O in Chapters 5 & 6 are based on the 2 x 2 contingency table:

ie.-

	X		Total
Y	a	b	(a+b)
	c	d	(c+d)
Total	(a+c)	(b+d)	

$$O = \frac{ad - bc}{\sqrt{(a+c)(b+d)(a+b)(c+d)}}$$

For example (see Table 2) in 1847 637 votes were cast by hosiery trade voters, 84.8% of which were radical votes. The remainder of the linked electorate cast a total of 1,683 votes, of which 1,068 were radical and 615 were moderate.

	Radical votes	Moderate votes	Total
Hosiery trade	540	97	637
Non-hosiery trade	1,068	615	1,683
Total	1,608	712	

$$O = \frac{(540 \times 615) - (97 \times 1,068)}{\sqrt{1,608 \times 712 \times 1,683 \times 637}}$$

$$O = +0.21 \text{ (to 2 decimal places).}$$

APPENDIX FOUR

## COMPOSITION OF OCCUPATIONAL GROUPINGS

DRINK TRADE:

Publican:	Hotel Keeper:
Victualler:	Brewer's Agent:
Retired Innkeeper:	Ale merchant:
Common brewer:	Shopman (Spirit trade):
Retired victualler:	Agent-wines & spirits:
Agent for liquors:	Beerhouse Keeper:
Clerk in wine vaults:	Licensed victualler:
Agent, Burton Brewery Co:	Wine merchant:
Agent for Ale:	Spirit merchant:
Merchant maltster:	Dealer in British wines:
Beerseller:	Ale & Porter merchant:
Inn Keeper:	Agent for wines:
Wine & spirit dealer:	Hop merchant:
Journeyman brewer:	Wine cellarman:
Traveller for Brewery:	Maltster:
Wine & spirit merchant:	Brewer:

BOOT & SHOE:

Bootmaker:	Cordwainer:
Boot & shoe maker:	Boot manufacturer:
Shoe dealer:	Shoeman:
Last & pattern maker:	Shoemaker:
Clerk (shoe manufactory):	Shoe manufacturer:

BUILDING TRADES:

Builder:	House decorator:
Plumber:	Painter:
Timber merchant:	Carpenter:
Joiner:	Master carpenter:
Retired Builder:	Slater:
Tile maker:	Formerly builder:
Bricklayer:	Brickmaker:
Glazier:	House painter:
Retired Carpenter:	Mill sawyer:
Bricklayer's labourer:	Paperhanger:
Mason:	Stonemason:
Plasterer:	Journeyman carpenter:
Slate cleaver:	

FOOD TRADES:

Baker:	Poulterer:
Milkman:	Biscuit maker:
Butcher:	Provision dealer:
Cowkeeper:	Retired Provision merchant:
Grocer:	Flour warehouseman:
Grazier:	Greengrocer:
Retail Grocer:	Cook:
Pork butcher:	Eatinghouse keeper:
Muffin & Crumpet baker:	Corn factor:
Foreman in grocery warehouse:	Wholesale grocer:
Tea Dealer:	Journeyman baker:
Miller:	Master grocer:
Corn dealer:	Retired Tea dealer:
Confectioner:	Master baker:
Tripe dresser:	Butter dealer:
Flour dealer:	Retired butcher:
Dairyman:	Fishmonger:
Journeyman miller:	Fruiterer:
Retired baker:	Grocer's assistant:
Gardener (35 acres):	Market gardener:
Cheese factor:	Seed merchant:

HOSIERY TRADE:

Retail hosier:	Master hosier:
Hosier:	Overlooker of hosiery:
Loom hand:	Stocking seamer:
Warehouseman:	Framesmith:
Framework knitter:	Stocking maker:
Glove manufacturer:	Needlemaker:
Manufacturer of fancy goods:	Warp hand:
Manufacturer of fancy hosiery:	Hosiery manufacturer:
Dyer of hosiery:	Manufacturer of Lisle Berlin:
Retired hosier:	Manufacturer of Warp gloves:
Fancy hosier:	Trimmer of stockings:
Stocking weaver:	Warp loomhand:
Glove cutter:	Cotton warp hand:

HOSIERY TRADE (Continued):

Stockinger:	Glove maker:
Clerk in hosiery warehouse:	Frameholder:
Bookkeeper to hosier:	Glover:
Commercial traveller - hosiery:	Sock hand:
Commission agent in hosiery yarns:	Commission agent(hose):
Fancy woollen hosier:	Retired framesmith:
Trimmer of hosiery:	Sock manufacturer:
Wholesale hosier:	Hosiery book-keeper:
Hosiery warehouseman:	Stocking framemaker:
Berlin Glove manufacturer:	

OTHER TEXTILES:

Operative in worsted mill:	Commission agent(yarns):
Stoker in worsted factory:	Worsteds overlooker:
Worsteds spinner:	Comber:
Tailor:	Woolstapler:
Draper:	Wool warehouse clerk:
Spinner:	Bleacher:
Wool dealer:	Dyer dresser:
Woolcomber:	Woollen yarn manufacturer:
Laceman:	Linen draper:
Lambswool manufacturer:	Woollen draper:
Lambswool spinner:	Worsteds maker:
Lacemaker:	Cotton manufacturer:
Woolsorter:	Yarn spinner:
Trimmer:	Scourer:
Lace dealer:	Scourer of yarn:
Fancy dyer:	Silk mercer:
Clothier:	Journeyman dyer:
Ropemaker:	Twinner's labourer:
Tailor's assistant:	Retired spinner:
Dyer:	Lacehand:
Berlin wool dealer:	Salesman of worsteds:
Hood curtain maker:	Lambswool slubber:
Silk Dyer:	Smallwears' weaver:
Foreman at worsteds manufactory:	Clerk-wool:



OTHER TEXTILES (Continued):

Wool carder:	Manufacturer of tapes:
Clerk in elastic web works:	Overlooker in cotton factory:
Woollen dyer:	Flax dresser:
Master tailor:	Retired dyer:
Overlooker of shirt manufactory:	Woollen rag manufacturer:
Manufacturer of elastic web:	Commercial traveller in lace:
Weaver(unspecified):	Cotton/worsted waste dealer:
Clerk to Court of taxes of wool merchants:	

CLERICAL & PROFESSIONAL:

Bank cashier:	Vicar of ----:
Attorney:	Rector of ---:
Surgeon:	Master of private school:
Surgeon(FRCS):	Wesleyan Minister:
Collector of accounts:	Minister of Independent Chapel:
Clerk in coal trade:	Schoolmaster:
Borough accountant:	Professor of Music:
Solicitor:	Teacher of music & singing:
Solicitor's general clerk:	Retired Dancing master:
Veterinary surgeon:	Gas Engineer:
Doctor of medicine:	Roman Catholic Priest:
Solicitor's managing clerk:	Apothecary & Practitioner:
Architect:	Surgeon & Dentist:
Banker:	Artist & Teacher of drawing:
Banker's clerk:	Captain-Royal Marines:
Physician:	Captain-Army (half-pay):
Sherriff's officer:	Retired Captain:
Clerk of Court:	Army Colonel/Magistrate:
Medical Practitioner:	Railway Debentures & Mortgages:
Surveyor:	Properannuator Officer of ease:
General Practitioner(MRCS):	Medical Botanist:
Medical Practise:	Portrait & animal painter:
Clergyman:	Dissenting Teacher of religion:
Dissenting Minister:	Painter-Artist:
Baptist Minister:	Book-keeper:
Independent Minister:	Writer:
Proprietor of Gas, Bank & Guaranteed Railway shares:	

CLERICAL & PROFESSIONAL (Continued):

Accountant:	Sergeant in Rutland militia:
Musician:	Engineer:
Governor of Borough gaol:	Town Missionary:
Registrar of Births & Deaths:	Office clerk:
Registration agent:	Clerk (unspecified):
Civil Engineer:	Student at Law:
Newspaper proprietor:	Mechanical Engineer:
Incumbent at St. Georges:	Railway clerk:
Clerk of Market:	Relieving Officer:
Retired Captain in HEJCS:	Quarter Master:
President of Baptist College:	Newspaper Editor:
Teacher of Divinity & Classical	Librarian:
-Literature:	Major in Army:
Surveyor of Taxes:	Superannuated Excise officer:
Sub-agent, Bank of England:	High Constable:
Auctioneer's clerk:	Publisher:
Excise Officer:	Life & Fire agent:
Registrar of Ecclesiastical Court:	Railway Goods manager:
Officer of Inland Revenue:	House & Estate agent:
High Bailiff, County Court:	Chaplain of County gaol:
Chaplain of Lunatic Asylum:	Auctioneer:
Clerk of Iron & Brass foundry:	Superintendent of Police:
Waterwork's clerk:	Parish clerk:
Agent for Conservative Society:	Canal agent:
Pensioner from Royal Artillery:	Agent for paper boxes:
Shipping Merchant's clerk:	Rate collector:
General agent:	Police constable:
Manager of Building Society:	Staff-sergeant-Army:
Superintendent of Railway works:	Currier's agent:
Inspector of weights & measures:	Commercial clerk:
Domestic Missionary:	Collecting clerk:
Newspaper reporter:	Station master:
Sergeant in Leicester militia:	Private tutor:
Collector to Gas Company:	Insurance agent:
Clerk to Gas Company:	Vestry clerk:
Clerk to Leicester Union:	Commission agent(unspecified)
Chelsea Pensioner (if no other occupation):	

ALSO INCLUDED AMONG  
CLERICAL & PROFESSIONAL:

Fundholder:	Annuitant:
Land & House proprietor:	Magistrate:
Landed proprietor:	Gentleman:
Income from houses:	Esquire:
County Magistrate:	Landowner:
Proprietor of Houses:	Independent:

NOT INCLUDED IN OCCUPATIONAL  
GROUPINGS:

Farmer:	Whitesmith & Bellhanger:
Nurseryman:	Bookseller:
Tanner:	Railway servant:
Marine horse dealer:	Labourer:
Ostler:	Sinkermaker:
Cooper:	Tobacco pipe maker:
Town servant:	Rag & Bone dealer:
Railway guard:	Turner of bowls:
Servant:	Tallow Chandler:
Machinist:	Saw maker:
Cabinet maker:	Tool dealer:
Wood turner:	News agent:
Engine driver:	Haberdasher:
Traveller in earthenware:	Watchmaker:
Gardener (no given acreage):	General dealer:
Lock maker:	Barber:
Ironfounder:	Hairdresser:
Smith:	Medical plaster maker:
Fitter:	Pawnbroker:
Engine turner:	Broker:
Letter Press printer:	Gardener's labourer:
Attendant:	Coal merchant:
Store-keeper:	Upholsterer:
Engine smith:	Wheelwright:
Engine fitter:	Furniture broker:
Ironmonger:	Brazier:
Ironmonger's assistant:	Master model maker:

NOT INCLUDED IN OCCUPATIONAL  
GROUPINGS (Continued):

Groom:	Bone sawyer:
Pasteboard box manufacturer:	Millwright master:
Journeyman coach wheeler:	Clockmaker:
Stoker:	Founder:
Shopman:	Hatter:
Rakemaker:	Bookmaker:
Law stationer:	Railway porter:
Saddler:	Basket maker:
Iron foundry porter:	Bobbin turner:
Spring maker:	Scale maker:
Gas fitter:	Coal carrier:
Cutler:	Gas meter inspector:
Drayman:	Farrier:
Commercial traveller(un- specified):	Labourer at wharf:
Brushmaker:	China & Glass dealer:
Day labourer:	Pipe manufacturer:
Silversmith:	Stationer:
Jeweller:	Leather dresser:
Fireman(Locomotive):	Staw bonnet manufacturer:
Harness maker:	Picture dealer:
Music seller:	Braidmaker:
Boarding-house keeper:	Windsor chair maker:
Turner:	Agricultural labourer:
Currier:	Blacksmith:
Carter (general):	Manufacturer of hat & cap:
Druggist:	Coachmaker:
Iron grate fitter:	Printer:
Chemist:	Leather cutter:
Boat man:	Overlooker in brace factory:
Iron machinist:	Bracemaker:
Umbrellamaker:	Printer's compositor:
Mechanic:	Fire-grate fitter:
Steam sawyer:	Box maker:
Coachsmith:	Chimney sweeper:
	Porter:

NOT INCLUDED IN OCCUPATIONAL  
GROUPINGS (Continued):

Carman:	Designer:
Labourer at Gas works:	Billiard Table proprietor:
Iron moulder:	Flyman:
Milliner:	Musician:
Carver & Gilder:	Retired sheepdip salesman:
Lamplighter:	Homeopathic chemist:
Retired Tanner:	Boilermaker:
Retired Tradesman (unspecified):	Gunsmith:
Boots at Grand Hotel:	Traveller (unspecified):
Tin plate worker:	Matchmaker:
Bookbinder:	Pensioner from County Prison:
Fancy Bazaar keeper:	Whip maker:
Letter carrier:	Barometer & Looking-glass dealer:
Hawker:	Coppersmith:
Pianoforte tuner:	Agricultural Implement maker:
Paper dealer:	Brace hand:
Cab proprietor:	Vocalist:
Photographic Artist:	Retired Engraver:
Dentist:	